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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

CATHOLIC MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHWEST 1818-1864

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
SISTER MARY AQUINAS NORTON, M. A.
of the
Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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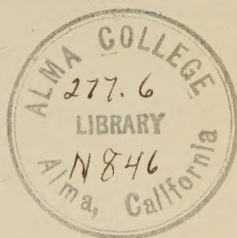
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PREFACE

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Washington, D. C.

Feast of Saint Joseph, 1930.

CATHOLIC MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHWEST, 1818-1864

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study in the history of the West has for its subject Catholic Missionary Activities in the Northwest from 1818, when the mission of Pembina was established on Dakota soil, until the year 1863, when many of the Sioux Indians were removed to lands along the Missouri River. By the Northwest is here meant that section of the United States which is now incorporated into the states of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. This monograph is confined to missionary activities carried on among the Indians and half-breeds with the exception of the Pembina mission where the narrative of the events of the mission includes, at all times, white settlers, half-breeds and Indians.

The history of the West has included a succession of frontier lines. From time to time in the settlement of the United States, the term Northwest was applied to various sections of the country. Just as the frontier line pushed its way westward, so the western confine of the Northwest moved toward the Rocky Mountains gradually but rather more rapidly than the frontier line.

In 1666, when the earliest missionary work was carried on in this region, the frontier line lay between the falls line and the Atlantic sea coast. By 1727, when the first mission was erected in this Northwest, the frontier line had moved farther west, a little beyond the falls line and generally parallel to the coast. By the time the Pembina mission was opened in 1818, the frontier line had assumed a wedge shape, the apex of

which had crossed the Mississippi and reached the bend of the Missouri. The northern flank of this frontier stretched in a broken line from the bend of the Missouri to Detroit, Michigan, the southern flank, from the bend of the Missouri southward and eastward in a broken line to include New Orleans.

The French missionaries who labored in this section during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were preaching the Gospel on soil that then belonged to their mother country, France. When missionary activities began here again in the nineteenth century, Spain and France had relinquished their claims to this region and England was about to relinquish her last claim to the country below the 49° parallel in the boundary adjustment of 1818. Thus all this territory was brought under the jurisdiction of the United States. That part of this Northwest east of the Mississippi had been incorporated in the old Northwest by the Ordinance of 1787. That west of the Mississippi was included in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 as further described in the treaty of 1818.

This Northwest was Indian land up to 1837. Then the Sioux of the Mississippi signed a treaty ceding to the United States all of their lands east of the Mississippi River. In the course of the same year, the Chippewa Indians ceded to the United States lands east of the Mississippi with a northern boundary running from the mouth of the Crow Wing River through St. Croix Lake in Wisconsin. Fourteen years later the Sioux made another cession. By the treaty of 1851, the United States received all lands to the east of the Red and Sioux rivers except a strip twenty miles wide along the Minnesota River from Lake Traverse to a line a few miles west of the present site of New Ulm, Minnesota. This they reserved for themselves. A third cession, in 1858, gave to the United States all lands north and east of the Minnesota River. The Sioux still retained that part of the reservation south and west of the Minnesota River. In penalty for the Sioux Massacre of 1862, the government ordered all the Sioux of the Missis-

sippi or the Minnesota Sioux to be removed from Minnesota to Crow Creek reservation on the Missouri. The Plains Sioux or Dakota Sioux occupied their lands in Dakota unmolested by treaty negotiations until 1858. The Chippewa Indians, in treaties signed in 1854, 1855, and 1863, deeded to this government the vast territory occupied by them with the exception of certain reservation lands which they were allowed to retain for their own use. The Winnebago Indians who had been moved into Minnesota in 1848 and settled on the Long Prairie reservation were removed seven years later to a reservation on the Blue Earth River near Mankato, Minnesota, in modern Blue Earth and Waseca counties, which was given to them in exchange for the Long Prairie region. With the Sioux of the Mississippi the Winnebago were also driven westward in 1863.

When Minnesota Territory was organized in 1849, it had a population of about one person to forty square miles, made up of military agents, soldiers at the fort, employees of the American Fur Company, and a few settlers. This territory included within its boundaries all of the Northwest north and west of the frontier line which ran through the northeast corner of the state of Iowa, except that portion west of the Missouri River.

In 1825, John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, made a careful report on Indian affairs in which he suggested the setting aside of a tract of land west of the Missouri River for the future home of the Indians of the United States. President Monroe submitted this report to Congress, January 27, 1825, which on consideration determined: Sufficient authority must be placed in the hands of the War Department to enable it to negotiate and make treaties with the Indian tribes which would be binding on the United States as well as on the Indians. These treaties must be confirmed by the Senate. A section of the country west of the Missouri River should be set aside for the occupancy of the Indians. The tribes of Indians occupying this region must be persuaded to permit

the Indians removed from the East to settle within their lands; Indians located east of the new Indian country had to be persuaded to make treaties ceding to the government lands which they were occupying east of the Missouri.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, created in 1832, was part of the War Department until 1849, when it was transferred to the newly established Department of the Interior. This Bureau was under a commissioner whose sole duty was to protect the treaty-rights of the Indians. In 1834 there was passed the Indian Intercourse Act; by this all white persons were forbidden entrance into the Indian country without a license from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Indian country was divided into superintendencies, agencies, and sub-agencies, over each of which was placed respectively a superintendent, an agent and a sub-agent. As soon as the tribes settled in villages, the government provided agents and blacksmiths for them and opened schools which they might attend. It also supplied them with domestic animals and farming implements. Notwithstanding the plans of the government for the betterment of the Indians, irregularities appeared in the conduct of treaty agreements because of unscrupulous political agents, and as a result the Indians were often cheated of their rights. Schools were conducted by missionaries or their assistants, who submitted annual reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Where treaties called for an educational fund, the commissioner was expected to furnish financial assistance to each missionary conducting such a school. Here again there were abuses. Money intended for school purposes was sometimes retained by a dishonest agent, or even given as salaries to teachers who had ceased giving instruction to the Indians.

President Grant declared in his Message ¹ to Congress, December 5, 1870:

Indian agencies being civil offices, I determined to give all the

¹ *Congressional Globe*. 41st Cong. 3d Sess.

agencies to such religious denominations as had heretofore established missionaries among the Indians, and perhaps to some other denominations who would undertake the work on the same terms, i. e., as a missionary work. The societies selected are allowed to name their own agents, subject to the approval of the Executive, and are expected to watch over them, and aid them as missionaries to Christianize and civilize the Indian, and to train him in the arts of peace. The Government watches over the official acts of these agents, and requires of them as strict an accountability as if they were appointed in any other manner. I entertain the confident hope that the policy now pursued will in a few years bring all the Indians upon reservations, where they will live in houses, have schoolhouses and churches, and will be pursuing peaceful and self-sustaining avocations, and where they may be visited by the law-abiding whiteman with the impunity that he now visits the civilized white settlements. I call your special attention to the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for full information on this subject.

President Grant inaugurated this policy because experience had convinced him that money and bayonets would not make the Indian amenable to law and order. He had tried the plan he presented to Congress. He was persuaded that the only solution for the problem of Christianizing and civilizing the Indians was the union of Christian and civil influences working on the Indian.

That the policy did not work out in justice to all denominations is evidenced by a letter ² of Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley of Baltimore to the Secretary of the Interior, January 2, 1874:

The Catholic Bishops of the United States who have Indian Missions within the limits of their Dioceses have requested me to appoint a responsible person residing in Washington as their representative, near the Department having charge of these matters.

They are not able to leave their Dioceses to come to Washington to explain the great injustice which is often done towards the missions (which have been for so many years under their care) on account, as they believe, of erroneous information sent to the Department, and they

² *Circular of the Catholic Commissioner for the Indian Missions of the United States* (Baltimore, 1874), 3 f.

feel that it would be a great advantage to them and agreeable to the Department, if some one fully acquainted with the whole matter should take charge of the interests of the old Catholic Missions amongst the Indians.

In accordance with their request, and acting in their name, I have appointed General Charles Ewing,³ of Washington, to act as Commissioner on the part of the Catholic Bishops for this purpose, as one every way fitted for the position, and I am confident personally acceptable to yourself; and as such, I respectfully recommend him to your kind attention.

Thus was created the Office of Catholic Commissioner for Indian Missions, about two hundred years after the first missionary activities were carried on in the Northwest.

Prior to the nineteenth century, Catholic missionaries had preached the Gospel in the Minnesota region at the Lake of the Woods, at the head of Lake Superior, and along the upper Mississippi. The first *Black-Robe* to visit this region was Claude Allouez of the Society of Jesus. While stationed at the Mission of Saint Esprit, Chequamegon Bay, October 1, 1665, to May 6, 1667, he visited the Chippewa Indians at the head of Lake Superior or, as he called it, Lake Tracy. He spent a month among them. During this time, he instructed the Indians in the mysteries of faith and baptized twenty children and one adult who was ill and "died on the day after

³ Charles Ewing was born at Lancaster, Ohio, March 6, 1835. He was educated at Gonzaga College, Washington, and at the University of Virginia. In 1860, he began the practice of law in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1861, at the outbreak of the Civil War, he was commissioned a captain in the Thirteenth Infantry of United States Regulars. He served in the Arkansas, Mississippi and Atlanta campaigns. He was commissioned in turn lieutenant colonel, assistant inspector-general of volunteers, inspector-general of the Fifteenth Army Corps, brigadier-general and brevet-colonel. In 1867, after his retirement from the army, he took up the practice of law in Washington. Pope Pius IX created him a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great in 1877. He was a cousin of James G. Blaine and a brother-in-law of General William T. Sherman. He died at Washington on June 20, 1883.—Gail Hamilton, *Biography of James G. Blaine*, 66; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, V, 673.

his Baptism bearing to Heaven the first-fruits of his nation.”⁴ Allouez found Lake Superior to be “the resort of twelve or fifteen distinct nations—coming, some from the North, others from the South, and still others from the West” to fish and carry on commerce with one another. The missionary saw in this general gathering of Indians a means “to facilitate the proclaiming of the Gospel to wandering and vagrant tribes.”⁵ He encountered at the head of Lake Superior the Sioux Indians, whose habitat was forty or fifty leagues to the west of the Mission of Saint Esprit “toward the great river named Messipi.” Their language, however, differed so from that of the Chippewa that Father Allouez found himself “obliged to address them through an interpreter, who, being an infidel, did not accomplish what I might well have wished.”⁶ Yet he at least baptized a dying child.⁷ Other than this, Allouez carried on no further missionary work within the confines of the present state of Minnesota.

A little more than a decade later, Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan Recollect, came to Canada (1675) in company with René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle,⁸ for the purpose of making interior explorations and evangelizing the natives.⁹ Father Hennepin with two companions, Anthony Auguel surnamed Picard du Gay and Michael Accau, was on a journey of exploration up the Mississippi River to its source. They had parted from La Salle at Fort Crevecoeur on the Illinois River about the end of February, 1680.¹⁰ The Hennepin party fell into the hands of the Sioux, April 12, 1680, about one hundred and fifty leagues above the Illinois River¹¹ and were carried up the Mississippi. It was at this time that Hennepin discovered the beautiful falls, the site of modern Minneapolis, which he named after St. Anthony of Padua, under whose

⁴ *Jesuit Relations*, LI, 61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, L. 267.

⁶ *Ibid.*, LI, 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, LI, 55.

⁸ Hennepin, *A New Discovery*, I, xiv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 25 f.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 180.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I, 228, 235.

patronage the voyage had been undertaken. Eight leagues above St. Anthony Falls, at St. Francis River, now Rum River, the Sioux made prisoners of the Frenchmen.¹²

In speaking of the manner in which the Sioux despoiled the party of their baggage, Father Hennepin confided to his narrative: ". . . They seiz'd my Brocade Chasuble, and all the Ornaments of my portable Chapel, except the Chalice, which they durst not touch. They observ'd that this Vessel which was of Silver gilt, cast a glittering Light, so that as often as they chanc'd to look towards (*sic*) it, they would shut their Eyes: The reason was, as we understood afterwards, because they believ'd it to be a Spirit which would kill them . . . I had a little Chest, which I kept lock'd: . . . After I had open'd it, and they saw there was little or nothing in it but Books and Papers, they left it me untouch'd."¹³ They used the chasuble for some time to cover the bones of their dead, then gave it to a tribe in alliance with them. The Frenchmen, given to three of the chiefs to replace sons killed in battle, passed the summer among the Sioux in the vicinity of Mille Lacs. Hennepin spent his time trying to instruct them and in compiling a dictionary in their language. Incidentally he speaks of baptizing a young child who died almost immediately after receiving the sacrament.¹⁴

In the early part of July, the Sioux began to assemble for the regular buffalo hunt. Father Hennepin, in preparation for the hunt, hid his chalice, books and papers in a hole in the ground, retaining only his breviary. The Indians and Frenchmen began their southern journey, making a halt at Rum River. It was here that Hennepin and Picard du Gay determined to set out for the Wisconsin River for the men, ammunition, and supplies promised by La Salle. Not finding anything at the Wisconsin River, they began their ascent of the Mississippi again. At Buffalo River they met with the hunting

¹² *Ibid.*, I, 223-225.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, 250.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 247, 255, 259, 265, 294.

party and together they continued their voyage up the Mississippi.¹⁵ It was on this return voyage that the party met with Sieur Greysolon du Luth,¹⁶ who, hearing of the capture of Father Hennepin's party, had led forth an expedition to rescue them. The Indians and Frenchmen, including Hennepin's and Du Luth's men, continued on their way to the Indian village at Mille Lacs, where they arrived on August 14, 1680. Here Father Hennepin regained his chalice and other effects.¹⁷

Near the end of September, the Frenchmen informed the Sioux that they were desirous of returning to Canada but wished to reserve the privilege of carrying on trade with the Indians. To facilitate this, some halfway place to be agreed upon by all concerned would serve as a point of exchange for furs and merchandise. The Indians met in council and decided to permit the explorers to depart. One of the chiefs mapped out four hundred leagues of the route which they were to follow. He also provided them with some sustenance for the journey. The party composed of Father Hennepin, Picard du Gay, Michael Accau, Sieur du Luth, and four soldiers left the Sioux country by way of the Rum River, down the Mississippi, up the Wisconsin to find their way by stages to Canada.¹⁸ This ended Father Hennepin's missionary activities as far as Minnesota was concerned. However, as a result of this expedition, Father Philippe Pierson of the Society of Jesus was appointed (1683) to take up mission work among the Sioux beyond the Mississippi.¹⁹

The region of the upper Mississippi was taken possession of in the name of Louis XIV of France by Nicolas Perrot, May 8, 1689, in the presence of Father Joseph J. Marest, S. J.,

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 271-293.

¹⁶ Margry, *Découvertes et Etablissements des Français dans l'Ouest et dans le Sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, VI, 23.

¹⁷ Hennepin, *A New Discovery*, I, 289-295.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 297-304.

¹⁹ *Jesuit Relations*, LXII, 193. Father Pierson died five years later in Lower Canada at Loretto or Quebec.—*Ibid.*, LXXI, 151.

missionary to the Sioux, and *Sieur le Sueur's* party of six men at Perrot's post on the Wisconsin shore of Lake Pepin. There is no indication that Father Marest actually extended his regular missionary labors within the boundaries of Minnesota.²⁰

No organized attempt to establish a permanent mission and erect mission buildings among the Indian tribes of Minnesota was made until the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, S. J., visited the missions along the Great Lakes during a tour of New France in 1720 and 1721. On his return to France, he recommended to the government that a missionary be sent to establish a mission among the Sioux Indians then occupying the lands along the Mississippi River, the Minnesota River, and the Missouri River. Knowledge of a westward route to the Pacific, he believed, might be obtained through the missionary's contact with the Indians familiar with the far West. A mission might also serve as a trading center for this region. In addition, Charlevoix urged that explorers be dispatched up the Missouri River to its source.²¹

The French Government acted in part upon the suggestion. It was decided to send two missionaries to the Sioux, but the project of exploring the Missouri was not to be undertaken, as in all probability the missionaries would succeed in obtaining any desired information from the Indians.²² Preparations for the establishment of a post together with a mission were begun. On April 30, 1727, Charles Beauharnois, Governor-general of New France, wrote to the first Lord of the Admiralty asking for a case of mathematical instruments for the Jesuit missionaries who were to establish a mission in the Sioux country. Among the instruments enumerated were a dial plate of universal astronomy, a graduated semi-circle with the degrees indicated, a chain with stakes, and a telescope six

²⁰ Margry, *Découvertes*, V, 33 f.

²¹ *Ibid.*, VI, 527 f., 534.

²² *Ibid.*, VI, 536.

or seven feet long.²³ A commercial company was formed and an agreement entered into in Montreal, June 16, 1727. Among the articles of this agreement, two are of special interest in connection with the projected mission. "Article One" granted to the members of the company a complete monopoly of the fur trade in the Sioux country for three years. The financial support of the enterprise was provided for in this privilege. "Section One of Article Ten" called for the construction of a fort, a chapel, and two houses, one for the commanding officer and the other for the missionaries. The manner and place of construction was to be determined by the officer in charge of the fort. "Section Two of Article Ten" secured the gratuitous transportation of the effects of the leader of the expedition and the accompanying missionaries.²⁴

The expedition, which set out for the Sioux country from Montreal, June 16, 1727, was commanded by René Boucher, Sieur la Perrière. His brother, Pierre, and other relatives, and Fathers Nicolas de Gonnor and Michael Guignas of the Society of Jesus made up the party which arrived at Michilimackinac on July 22. There they remained until August 1, awaiting news from Montreal and making preparations for the journey through the lands of the hostile tribe of the Foxes. On August 8, they were at modern Green Bay. On the morning of August 11, accompanied by Father Chardon, S. J., of Green Bay, and Sieur Reaume, they continued westward through the country of the Foxes.²⁵ Two years earlier, Father Chardon had written that seven Frenchmen had been killed within a period of two years by the Sioux, Foxes, and Kickapoos, and that the Foxes had determined not to permit Frenchmen to pass into the country of the Sioux, since such direct contact would mean a diminution of the commerce carried on between the Foxes and the

²³ *Ibid.*, VI, 544; *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XVII, 9.

²⁴ Margry, *Découvertes*, VI, 547, 550.

²⁵ Shea, *Early Voyages up and down the Mississippi*, 167 f.

French.²⁶ August 15 and 16 were spent with the Foxes in an effort to ascertain their attitude in regard to the establishment of a post among the Sioux. With the aid of Father Chardon, a council was convened with Sieur Reaume as interpreter, at which it was found that the Foxes were not irreconcilably adverse to the opening of the proposed trading post. At its close, Chardon and Reaume, who had accompanied them for the express purpose of acting as intermediaries in treating with the Foxes, prepared to return to Green Bay, took leave of their countrymen, on the morning of August 17, and retraced their steps. The other party, continuing on toward the Sioux country, found navigation slow and the course uncertain; for, as Father Guignas wrote, "No one knew it, and we got astray every moment on water and on land for want of a guide and pilots."²⁷

At noon, September 17, 1727, they reached Lake Pepin, where they selected a site for the post "on the shore about the middle of the north side on a low point where the soil is excellent,"²⁸ near the present site of Frontenac, Minnesota. Immediately upon landing, work was begun upon Fort Beauharnois, as it was named in honor of the governor-general, which was completed within four days. The fort, which had two bastions, was one hundred feet square, and surrounded by pickets twelve feet high. The three buildings, erected within the enclosure, were as large as the fort would permit without crowding. One was twenty-five, another thirty, and the third, thirty-eight feet long and each sixteen feet in width. These were all completed and furnished before the end of October. It was only after the completion of these buildings that the party began to explore the neighboring hills and streams. The Indians immediately began to settle around the fort, and in a short time ninety-five cabins were assembled around the fort and mission

²⁶ Margry, *Découvertes*, VI, 542 f.

²⁷ Shea, *Early Voyages up and down the Mississippi*, 169.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

of St. Michael the Archangel. The Indians went into winter quarters about the end of November, but not at such a distance from the fort that all communication was cut off. Sixty Sioux of the Plains visited the fort at the end of February. Father Guignas's description of the site as a "low point" proved true, for during the high water period from the middle of April, 1728, to the end of the month, the party was forced to camp out on account of the inundation of the fort.²⁹

In the summer of 1728, Father de Gonnor and Sieur la Perrière returned to Montreal.³⁰ Because of trouble existing between the Sioux and their enemies the Foxes, Pierre de Boucher, who had been left in charge of the fort, decided on consultation with his fellow Frenchmen to evacuate it. All left together in canoes on October 3, 1728, but Father Guignas fell into the hands of the Kickapoos and Mascoutens. Held captive for five months, he was mistreated and about to be buried alive when an old Indian adopted him and procured his liberty.³¹

Sieur de Linctot was charged in 1731 with the reëstablishment of the Sioux post. He arrived at the Mississippi River in the spring of 1732, and wintered about thirty leagues below Fort Beauharnois at "La Montagne qui trempe dans l'Eau."³² This was on the east side of the Mississippi on the present site of Trempealeau, Wisconsin. While Father Guignas was with Linctot at the fort, Father Nau, S. J., wrote to Father Bonin, S. J., October 2, 1735: "Father Guignas is in the Sioux country, at a little French fort with but six men with him. Scarcely a month ago the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-general of New France, sent twenty-two men in four canoes with supplies of which he stood absolutely in need, for the Sioux refuse to provide for him. It is not at all certain that

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 172-174.

³⁰ *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XVII, 30.

³¹ *Jesuit Relations*, LXVIII, 207, 209.

³² *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XVII, 168.

the relief party will reach him without molestation, their route lying close to the country of the Foxes.”³³ Fort Beauharnois on Lake Pepin was reestablished some time between 1732 and 1736.³⁴ On September 16, 1736, the Sioux visited the fort but did not remain. As raiders they came again on December 18, and pulled up the stakes in Father Guignas’ garden, burned them and departed. On January 24, 1737, forty Sioux managed to get into the fort when the gate was opened. This was contrary to agreement with Sieur de Saint Pierre in charge of the fort. Only ten Sioux were to enter at a time. On March 18, serious hostilities broke out between the Chippewa and Sioux. Sieur de Saint Pierre, Sieur de Linctot and Father Guignas took counsel and decided to abandon the post, burn the fort, and make their escape. The post was evacuated on May 30, 1737.³⁵ This closed the history of the mission of St. Michael the Archangel. Father Guignas had found the warlike Sioux difficult to convert. Even children, baptized at the point of death, did not adhere to the faith on recovery from their illness.³⁶

While the French Government never acted upon the recommendation of Charlevoix to send explorers up the Missouri River in search of a passage to the western ocean, Pierre Gaultier de Varene, Sieur de la Vérendrye became interested in trans-Mississippi exploration. While commander of the post at Lake Nipigon,³⁷ an Indian brought him a crude map of the

³³ Jones, *The Aulneau Collection*, 65 f.

³⁴ Louise P. Kellogg in *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, p. 335, n. 53, gives the site of the rebuilt fort as on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi. Edward D. Neill (*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, X, 371 f.) is of the opinion that Fort Beauharnois was always within the area of Minnesota. William Watts Folwell in *A History of Minnesota*, I, p. 47, n. 56, lists several references in regard to the location of the fort. The evidence as given in these is strongly in favor of the site within the bounds of Minnesota.

³⁵ *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XVII, 269-274.

³⁶ Jones, *The Aulneau Collection*, 67.

³⁷ North of Lake Superior in Ontario, Canada.

water routes to the west of Lake Superior.³⁸ After making a careful study of this, he went to Montreal to obtain the requisite authority to carry out his plans of exploring the region to the west of his post. He left Montreal for the West on June 8, 1731, travelling as was customary by way of the Great Lakes. At Michilimackinac, he was joined by Father Charles Messaiger of the Society of Jesus, who planned to continue with the party as missionary to the West. On August 26, the party arrived at Grand Portage on the northern shore of Lake Superior near Pigeon River in the present territory of Minnesota. Father Messaiger was then the first priest to reach Grand Portage, the scene of the missionary labors of Father Francis Pierz in 1838. A mutiny of the employees of the party took place at Grand Portage. With the aid of Father Messaiger, this was ended and some of the men were persuaded to go under the leadership of Sieur de la Vérendrye's nephew, La Jemmeraié, to establish a fort at Rainy Lake on the Canadian side of the present boundary. The others spent the winter at Kaministigoya, about twenty-five miles northwest of the present site of Fort William, Ontario. The journey westward was resumed on June 7, 1732, and the party reached Fort St. Pierre on Rainy Lake, July 14, 1732. From this point to their destination at the Lake of the Woods, they were accompanied by more than fifty canoes of Indians. Fort St. Charles³⁹ was erected on the Lake of the Woods. Father Messaiger remained at Fort St. Charles until the following spring, when he returned to Montreal. Father Jean P. Aulneau, S. J., received an appointment to succeed Father Messaiger in the West.⁴⁰

In a letter⁴¹ dated at Fort St. Charles, April 30, 1736, Father Aulneau gave an account to his friend Father Bonin

³⁸ *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XVII, 102.

³⁹ This fort was "on the southern shore of the Northwest Angle Inlet, about two miles west of American Point," in Minnesota.—Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, I, 48.

⁴⁰ Margry, *Découvertes*, VI, 585-588.

⁴¹ Jones, *The Aulneau Collection*, 70-80.

of the journey to the West. On June 21, 1735, he left the Iroquois mission of Sault St. Louis. At Michilimackinac, he visited Father de Saint Pé. Thence he retraced his journey fifteen leagues in order to take the Lake Superior route. After leaving Lake Superior, he travelled in a western and southwestern direction among a great number of lakes. From the "upper extremity of Lake Superior to Fort St. Charles," a distance of three hundred leagues, most of the way led through fire and stifling smoke which obscured the light of the sun. The Indians, apparently while hunting, had started the forest fire. Father Aulneau found the journey, on the whole, monotonous; nothing was to be seen except lakes, rocks, immense forests, Indians, and a few wild animals. A description of Fort St. Charles, which was reached on October 23, 1735, is then given: "It is merely an enclosure made with four rows of posts, from twelve to fifteen feet in height, in the form of an oblong square, within which are a few rough cabins constructed of logs and clay and covered with bark." ⁴²

letter, Aulneau mentioned the missionary who had been promised to him as a coworker. He point out that the field was vast enough for five or six priests whose united efforts would offer a much greater chance of converting the tribesmen.

Late in the spring of 1736, Father Aulneau decided to go to Michilimackinac. Twenty-one *voyageurs*, among them Father Aulneau and one of the sons of Sieur de la Vérendrye, set out in three canoes to begin the journey to Michilimackinac. At this time, the Sioux were on the warpath against the Cree. About eighteen miles from the fort, the *voyageurs* were attacked by the Sioux, and the whole party was massacred, June 8, 1735. The bodies with heads severed and scalped were discovered within a few days.⁴⁴ Father Aulneau had no successor at Fort St. Charles.⁴⁵

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CHAPTER II

PEMBINA, 1818-1823

June 12, 1811, was an eventful day in the history of missionary activities in the valley of the Red River of the North. An agreement was entered into by the Hudson's Bay Company with Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, whereby he obtained a huge tract of land which was roughly described by

an imaginary Line running as follows (that is to say) beginning on the Western shore of Lake Winipie otherwise Winnipecy at a point of 52° 30' N. Lat. & thence running due West to the Lake Winipigoos so as to strike its Western shore in Latitude 52° then due west to the place where the parallel of 52° N. Lat. intersects the Western Branch of Red River otherwise called Assiniboyne River then due south from that point of intersection to the Height of Land which separates the waters running into Hudson's Bay from those of the Missouri and

were sent up on September 8, 1812. MacDonnell followed to select a site for the erection of buildings. He hit upon the usual encampment of the Sioux when on annual war expeditions, on the south side of the Pembina River at its conflux with the Red River. This he named Fort Daer. Plots of one hundred acres each were laid out by MacDonnell.⁴

In the fall of 1815, Miles MacDonnell, in a conversation with Bishop Joseph Octave Plessis, of Quebec, recommended that a missionary priest be sent to the Red River. In the spring of 1816, Lord Selkirk in a similar request supported the recommendation of Miles MacDonnell. He urged the Red River settlement as a permanent residence for the missionary rather than its recognition as a mission station, as he assured the bishop that he would do all in his power for the missionary who might be detailed and that he would provide for his accommodations and support.⁵ To this Bishop Plessis replied that present plans did not include the establishment of

River. Bishop Plessis was the recipient of a petition ⁷ signed in the summer of 1817 by twenty-two persons at the settlement, asking for a priest and setting forth reasons for the request. The petition pointed out that the free Canadians ⁸ had been without religious instruction from the time they had taken up their residence at the Red River; that they had had no pastor to guide them and to deter their children from taking part in bloodshed; and that the half-breeds of the colony would not have participated in the unhappy affair of the past year ⁹ had they had instructions in the Christian religion. At the same time a subscription for the furtherance of the establishment and maintenance of a mission at Red River ¹⁰ was submitted to His Excellency Governor General Sir John Sherbrooke for recommendation and approval. Both were readily obtained. Bishop Plessis gave his consent to the circulation of the subscription ¹¹ among the parishes of the Quebec Diocese.

A circular letter ¹² was addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Quebec by Bishop Plessis calling attention to the project of the establishment of a permanent mission at Red River; to the interest manifested in it by Protestants; to the subscription

⁷ Petition of the inhabitants of the Red River to Bishop Plessis. Original in Archepiscopal Archives of Quebec.

⁸ Free Canadians and freemen were the white settlers not in the employ of the fur companies.

⁹ The assassination of Governor Semple of the Hudson's Bay Company and the destruction of the Red River settlement. The Northwest Company was apparently responsible for both. The colony was reëstablished in the month of June, 1817.

¹⁰ Letter of Samuel Gale to W. B. Coltman, Montreal, January 1, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 745, 4303-4305 (transcript); Letter of W. B. Coltman to Governor Sherbrooke, Quebec, January 19, 1818, *Ibid.*, Series M. 745, 4384 (transcript).

¹¹ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Mr. Gale, Quebec, February 11, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 745, 4524 (transcript).

¹² Circular letter addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Quebec by Bishop Plessis, Quebec, March 29, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4723 (transcript); *Mandements, Lettres Pastorales et Circulaires des Evêques de Québec, III*, 149.

which had been opened in the month of January; and to the duty of each pastor to collect alms for the undertaking. On March 8, Bishop Plessis wrote¹³ Father Pierre Tabeau that it was difficult to refuse the demands of the colonists of the Red River for a permanent mission. Nor did he believe it necessary to await the cementing of peace between the two rival fur companies¹⁴ before beginning the work for the salvation of souls in the Northwest. He pointed out that the Governor General had placed his name at the head of the subscription list with no thought of favoring one company to the prejudice of the other. His own name had been second on the list, placed with no other object than the good which might result from the advance of the faith in that region. Some days later, the bishop determined to carry out on a larger scale the project which had miscarried in 1816. He planned to send two priests and a catechist to undertake the establishment of a permanent mission at Red River. Father Joseph Norbert Provencher was asked to undertake this difficult mission.¹⁵

On April 20, Bishop Plessis announced¹⁶ the appointment of Father Provencher and Father Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin¹⁷ to the mission of the Northwest to establish their principal residence on the Red River near Lake Winnipeg. He

¹³ Letter of Bishop Plessis to M. Pierre Tabeau, Quebec, March 8, 1818 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

¹⁴ Hudson's Bay Company and Northwest Company.

¹⁵ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Lord Selkirk, Quebec, March 16, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4673-4674 (transcript); *Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface*, III, 5 f.

¹⁶ Open letter of Bishop Plessis, Quebec, April 20, 1818. Original in Archbishopal Archives, Quebec; Colonial Office Records, Series Q. 148, I, 25-29 (transcript), Canadian Archives.

¹⁷ Father Dumoulin was born at Saint Anne, Montreal Isle, December 5, 1793. He was ordained February 23, 1817. He took up his residence at Pembina in 1818 and returned to Montreal in 1823. Upon his return he was appointed to the parish of St. Francis, and two years later to that of Yamachiche. He died here on July 27, 1853, the year in which his life-long friend, Bishop Provencher, died.—Tanguay, *Répertoire Général du Clergé Canadien*, 164.

begged that all Christians pay them due respect, place no obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of their mission, and prove docile to the gospel of peace which they had orders to proclaim. The missionaries on their part were not to participate in political matters, as "their only object will be to labor always for the preservation of concord amongst the brethren and for the sanctification of souls redeemed at the price of the blood of Jesus Christ."¹⁸ When Lord Selkirk received news of the appointment, he expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of the missionaries before their departure from their rendezvous in Montreal before continuing the journey into the West. He expected that they would take their departure about the first of May. He believed it necessary to take precautions to free the missionaries from obstacles which might prove detrimental to the work they were about to undertake. For this reason he recommended that Bishop Plessis ask Governor General Sherbrooke to appoint Captain de Lorimier of the Indian Department, a companionable officer who had wide experience in travelling and was greatly respected by the Indians and Canadians of the North, as an escort for the missionaries. This would have a most important effect on the Indians.¹⁹ Governor General Sherbrooke concurred and made the appointment,²⁰ writing to the Earl of Bathurst, Secretary of State, that he had given the support of his name to the establishment of a missionary on Red River and that he had made a personal contribution for his maintenance. He had agreed that the funds to be raised for the mission and the outfit of the mission were to be wholly under the control of the Bishop of Quebec "in

¹⁸ ". . . leur unique objet sera toujours de travailler au maintien de la concorde entre les frères et à la sanctification des âmes rachetées au prix du sang de Jésus-Christ."

¹⁹ Letter of Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, Montreal, April 16, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4798-4799 (transcript).

²⁰ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Lord Selkirk, Quebec, April 27, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4847-4848 (transcript).

whose discretion I have the fullest confidence.”²¹ To show his approval of the plan, Governor General Sherbrooke issued an order²² calling on His Majesty’s subjects not only to permit the missionaries to pass unmolested but to offer assistance when opportunity presented itself. Bishop Plessis issued *Instructions*²³ for

²¹ Letter of Governor General Sherbrooke to the Earl of Bathurst, Quebec, April 29, 1818, Colonial Office Records, Series Q. 148, I, 256-257 (transcript), Canadian Archives.

²² His Excellency Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, G. C. B., Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and Commander of His Majesty’s Forces therein etc., etc.,

To all to whom these presents shall come.

Whereas the Revrend Joseph Norbert Provencher, Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin, and Guillaume Etienne Edge, have been appointed by the most Revrend the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec to proceed as Missionaries to the Red River and the Adjacent Indian Territories there to disseminate the Christian Religion and to afford to the inhabitants the benefit of the Rites thereof now know ye that being desirous of furthering so pious and useful a work and of affording the fullest protection and support in my power to the persons engaged in it, I do hereby call on all His Majesty’s subjects civil and military and do request all other persons whomsoever to whom these presents shall come not only to permit the said Missionaries to pass without hindrance or molestation but to render them all good offices, assistance and protection wherever they shall find it necessary to go in the exercise of their holy calling.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at the castle of St. Lewis in the City of Quebec this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighteen and in the fifty-eighth year of His Majesty’s Reign.

J. C. Sherbrooke

By His Excellency’s command.

Andrew Wm. Cochran, Secretary.—(transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

²³ Instructions for Messrs. Joseph Norbert Provencher and Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin Priests Missionaries nominated for the Indian Territories situated at the North & West of Canada.

1. They are to consider it as the first object of their mission to recall from barbarity and the disorders which are the consequence of it the Savage Nations dispersed over that vast Country.

2. The second object is to direct their labors towards those bad Christians who have there adopted the morals of the savages and live in licentiousness and forgetfulness of their duty.

3. Persuaded that the preaching of the Gospel is the most certain means

the missionaries and wrote to the colonists at Red River to

of obtaining these blessed effects they will lose no opportunity to inculcate its principles and maxims either in their private conversations or public instructions.

4. In order to render themselves more readily useful to the natives of the Country where they are sent they will apply themselves from the moment of their arrival to the study of the savage languages and will endeavor to reduce them to regular principles in such manner as to be enabled to publish a grammar of them after some years' residence.

5. They will prepare with all possible expedition the infidel women who live in concubinage with Christians in order to substitute legitimate marriage instead of these irregular unions.

6. They will attach themselves with particular care to the Christian Education of the children, they will establish to that effect Schools and Catechisms in all the villages they shall have an opportunity of visiting.

7. In all distinguishable places whether from their situation from the passage of the Traveller or from the assembling of the Savages they will take care to cause to be erected high crosses as taking possession of these several places in the name of the Religion of Jesus Christ.

8. They will often repeat to the people towards whom they are sent how much this Religion severely prescribes peace, mildness, obedience to the Laws as well of the State as the Church.

9. They will make known to them the advantage they have in living under the Government of His Britannic Majesty, they will teach them both by example and precept the respect & fidelity they owe to the Sovereign accustoming them to address fervent prayers to God for the prosperity of His Most gracious Majesty and his august family and Empire.

10. They will maintain a perfect equilibrium between the reciprocal pretensions of the two Companies the North West and Hudson's Bay remembering that they are exclusively sent for the Spiritual good of the people by the civilization of which the advantage of both companies ought to result.

11. They will fix their residence near Fort Douglas on the Red River, there they will build a Church, a house, a school etc., they will select for their subsistence the best possible part of the lands which shall be given them and altho' that River as well as lake Winipic where it discharges itself is situated in the territory claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company they will not be less ardent for the salvation of the Clerks engaged and the Travellers who are in the service of the North West Company taking care to convey themselves everywhere where they shall be called for the good of Souls.

12. They will give us frequent and regular information of everything than can interest, retard or favour the progress of the Mission and if notwithstanding the most impartial conduct they shall find themselves dis-

announce their coming.²⁴ Copies of the *Instructions* and *Pastoral Letter* were forwarded to Governor Sherbrooke to be transmitted to England.

The two missionaries met in Montreal in 1818. They were joined here by William Edge, the catechist who was assigned to assist in the instruction of the children and to take charge of the mission school. Father Provencher learned that more than sufficient funds to defray the expense of the journey were at his disposal. A deed conveying the title of certain lands in the Red River Valley to the Church was given by Lord Selkirk and duly signed by all concerned with the exception of Bishop Plessis who was not present but whose signature would

turbed in the exercise of their functions they will not abandon their mission before having received our order.

Given at Quebec the 20th April 1818

(Signed) J. O. Cath:Bp. of Quebec.

true copy P. F. Turgeon PtScy—Copy sent to

Lord Selkirk, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4818-4821 (transcript); Colonial Office Records, Series Q. 148, I, 260-263 (transcript), Canadian Archives.

²⁴ Joseph Octave Plessis by the mercy of God and the Grace of St. Siege, Apostolic Bishop of Quebec etc., etc., etc.,

To the Colonists of the Red River in l'Ossinaboia Salvation and Benediction.

We have received my very dear children your request of last autumn urgently demanding that we should be pleased to establish a permanent mission amongst you. Nothing could better meet our inclination and desires than such a request. We are therefore eager to acquiesce therein especially in choosing from our clergy two priests equally recommendable by their zeal, their piety and the purity of their doctrine.

These two Missionaries devote themselves to the salvation of your souls and those of our Brethren separating themselves to that effect from their friends, from their families, from all hopes and consolations they might be able to find in Canada if they should have remained there. Thank God my very dear children for the acquisition you make of these two estimable subjects. Endeavor to sweeten their ministry amongst you by your docility, your obedience and your eagerness to profit from their instructions and good examples. Regard them as your spiritual Fathers charged to speak to you from God and to speak to God for you. They will reckon nothing neither their fatigues nor their labours if they find amongst the flock confided to them the desire of knowing the true Religion, of practicing

be affixed before the deed would be forwarded to the new western mission. Preparations for the journey had been going on for some time and, as Father Provencher said, seemed to be more troublesome than the voyage itself. At length all was in readiness.²⁵

The missionaries left Montreal, May 19, and embarked from Lachine on the following day. The journey, which consumed almost two months, was made by slow stages along lakes and rivers. Before the end of the first day, they arrived at the Lake of Two Mountains where they were forced to wait two days for a canoe. This time was put to good use, however, for they secured a copy of the catechism and prayers in the Algonquin language and were promised a copy of the examination of conscience in the same language. Captain de Lorimier, who accompanied them, proved excellent company. He was cheerful, agreeable, refined, and upright. The journey on the whole was favorable and without accident. They arrived at Fort Douglas, eighteen leagues from the mouth of the Red River, about five o'clock on the evening of July 16. This, placed under the patronage of St. Boniface, was to be the site of their first mission and the center for others.²⁶

Here they found the Chippewa Indians living in the neighborhood in scattered camps, which would add to the difficulties

and honoring it which has without doubt been the motive of your request. Put them in the state of giving us a pretty advantageous testimony of you to induce us to add in a short time another co-operator.

Let the present pastoral Letter be read and published in an assembly of the Colonists of the Red River whether it be by one of the Missionaries or by the Ecclesiastic who accompanies them or by such other person as they shall be pleased to appoint.

Given at Quebec under our hand the seal of our Arms and the Counter-sign of our Secretary the 25th April 1818.

(Sig) (SS) J. O. Bp. of Quebec

By Monseigneur

(Sig) P. F. Turgeon PtreSecr.—Copy sent to Lord Selkirk, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 746, 4836-4837 (transcript).

²⁵ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 9 f.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 18-20, 29 f.

of civilizing and Christianizing them, for only a few could be instructed at a time. This was equally true of other nations in the vicinity. The Indians were peaceful enough but, like all Indians, were lovers of strong drink, a formidable obstacle to their conversion. Intercourse with the whites tended to corrupt rather than give them an idea of morality and religion. The Chippewa had a passion for making war on neighboring nations in spite of their invariable lack of success. On the whole, the Indians were as superstitious as ignorant. Ordinarily the half-breeds, known as *Métis* or *Bois-Brûlés*, were intelligent. They committed to memory with facility the prayers and catechism and readily understood such instructions as the missionaries felt necessary and proper to give them.²⁷

Lord Selkirk received information that "The arrival of the Roman Catholic Priests in Red River seems to have diffused general satisfaction among all persons who feel interested in the success of the Settlement and cannot fail in my humble opinion, to produce all the good Effects which your Lordship has anticipated,"²⁸ and that "The Establishment of a church there has been attended with the most beneficial consequences."²⁹ Captain de Lorimier reported that the Canadians, *anciens voyageurs* with their half-breed families, were disposed to profit by the instructions of the missionaries and that the Indians themselves had testified their respect for them.³⁰

The missionaries planned to give their chief attention to the Indians, and for this work they prepared themselves by learning the local Indian dialects. In order to preach to the Indians, it was necessary to follow them from camp to camp. Father Dumoulin began the study of the Chippewa, which he found

²⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 21 f.

²⁸ Letter of Thomas Thomas to Lord Selkirk, Norway House, August 12, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 748, 5299-5300 (transcript).

²⁹ Letter of Robert Dickson to Lord Selkirk, Sault Ste. Marie, November 12, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 748, 5527-5528 (transcript).

³⁰ Letter of Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, Montreal, October 17, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 748, 5419-5420 (transcript).

little different from the Algonquin tongue, whereas he found the Sioux language quite different. A missionary with a knowledge of the latter would be able to make himself understood by the numerous Indians to the south of the Chippewa.

Father Dumoulin decided to go thirty leagues farther up the river to Pembina for the winter, because there would be more settlers there than at Fort Douglas. Colonists from Fort Douglas went to Pembina for the winter or took up their permanent abode there because the colony had a fort at that place and it was easier to get provisions there. Practically all the provisions for Fort Douglas had to be brought down from Pembina.³¹ Two of the chests containing chapel effects did not arrive until August 29. This delayed the departure which was to have taken place the middle of August. Meanwhile, Father Dumoulin received a letter from his mother asking to be permitted to join him in the West. He referred the matter to Lady Selkirk who, he thought, might bring his mother to the settlement the following summer.³² The mother never visited the mission. Finally all seemed ready and Father Dumoulin planned to depart on the following Monday, August 31, but there was again delay of a few days. This time it was found necessary to wait for a barge, since Mr. Edge, who was accompanying Father Dumoulin, was not able to travel by horseback. The journey took four days by barge or two by horseback. At Pembina, Father Dumoulin expected to take advantage of the opportunity offered to learn the language of the Chippewa Indians who lived in the neighborhood.³³

From the time of their arrival at Red River, both missionaries realized that the task of converting the Chippewa pre-

³¹ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 30 f.

³² Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Red River, August 14, 1818 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letter of Father Dumoulin to Lady Selkirk, Red River, August 27, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 748, 5314-5315 (transcript).

³³ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Red River, September 10, 1818 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

sented a real problem. Father Dumoulin believed that in order to civilize and Christianize them, the government should put forth an effort to assemble them in villages where churches could be built, schools opened and houses erected. Here, too, agricultural methods could be taught and seed furnished for the sowing. If something of this kind were not done, the difficulties met with in trying to instruct the Indians would be great. Crime proved less apparent among the Indians than the missionaries had expected, and the most outstanding vices were the result of intercourse with the whites. The missionaries were made to feel that the Indians held them in respect from the moment of their first arrival.³⁴

When Father Dumoulin reached Pembina, the freemen and hunters or half-breeds began to build a temporary chapel. Because of the number of persons who either made a permanent residence or spent the winter at Pembina, the missionary found more work than he had anticipated. In all there were some three hundred persons, whites and half-breeds. Up to January 5, 1819, Father Dumoulin had administered the sacrament of baptism to fifty-two persons, for six of whom he performed the marriage ceremony immediately thereafter. He made plans for the mission buildings, which he laid before his congregation at Christmas. His building project included a chapel sixty by forty feet in size and a missionary's residence forty by twenty-seven feet. At first thought, he intended to ask the members of the congregation to prepare the timbers for the buildings, but, on second thought, he realized this would not be expedient, because of their lack of knowledge and skill for the work. It would be more satisfactory to take up a subscription among the colonists and half-breeds, who generally realized considerable sums from the hunt, and hire skilled labor. The response was most generous, for there was a feeling of uncertainty lest otherwise they would be deprived of a resident priest.

³⁴ Letters of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Red River, August 30, and September 10, 1818 (transcripts), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

If the chapel and house were built, they anticipated that Father Dumoulin would remain. Father Provencher had scruples about establishing the foundation at Pembina when the subscription had been taken up in Quebec for an establishment at Fort Douglas on the Red River.³⁵ However, Bishop Plessis was pleased that Father Dumoulin had gone to Pembina, and he saw in the erection of a chapel there an opportunity to spread the faith.³⁶

The question of the conversion of the Indians was dominant with Father Dumoulin, especially as he found them so ready to accept instructions. The inclination for rum and their nomadic life alone seemed obstacles. In order to instruct them, it was necessary for him to leave the settlement and to spend some time among them learning their language. This could not be accomplished at the fort. Was this the right thing to do when probably no more than ten lodges could be visited in the two weeks, while, at the same time, about one hundred and fifty persons would be deprived of hearing Mass at the settlement? This question, together with other special problems, was submitted to Bishop Plessis for advice and decision.³⁷

As Father Dumoulin's plans materialized, he wrote for supplies for the school and furnishings for the chapel: catechisms, primers, manuals on mathematics and physics, a censor, an ostensorium, coverings for the credence table, pictures, rosaries, crosses, a bell of from fifteen to eighteen pounds weight, an altar frontal, vestments for travelling purposes, a collection of sermons, a holy water font, and hymn books. Hymnals were desired because one of the little half-breeds knew the notes at this early period of the mission's existence. Father Provencher, who had been appointed Bishop Plessis's Vicar General in the

³⁵ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, January 5, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

³⁶ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Father Provencher, Quebec, January 6, 1819. Original in Archbishopal Archives of Quebec.

³⁷ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, January 4, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

West, visited Father Dumoulin in January. He found that most of the timbers needed for the buildings of the missions at Fort Douglas and Pembina had been cut. Carpenters were needed to complete the work of erecting the buildings. At Father Dumoulin's request, Father Provencher named St. Francis Xavier as patron of the Pembina mission in the hope that Bishop Plessis would confirm the choice.³⁸

The buffaloes ranged at some distance from Pembina. The Indians were unable to come for instructions, and Father Dumoulin looked about for some means to overcome the difficulties. He found two: one, in his team of nine dogs who would carry him and his effects from encampment to encampment, the other, in a young man—Lagassé, by name—who came to Father Dumoulin ready to do whatever was suggested for the good of his soul and the souls of his neighbors. It was deemed advisable that he open a school for the instruction of children of the freemen. He spent the winter in a camp where he instructed fifty persons. Forty of them were children. Half of these would learn the catechism by Easter. Most of them would be able to read by spring. This condition was most gratifying to Father Dumoulin. Lagassé, in Father Dumoulin's opinion, was a better teacher than William Edge.³⁹

The mission at Pembina was scarcely opened when apprehensions arose as to what effect the boundary agreement between England and the United States would have on the Selkirk colony and its missions.⁴⁰ There could be no question about the mission at Fort Douglas. It was situated above the

³⁸ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, January 12, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 33, 36.

³⁹ Letters of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, February 5 and 14, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴⁰ Letter of Alex. Mundell to the Earl of Bathurst, London, November 5, 1818, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 748, 5521-5522; Letter of Bishop Plessis to Lady Selkirk, Quebec, March 20, 1819, *Ibid.*, Series M. 750, 6003-6005 (transcripts).

parallel of 49° N. Lat. It was another matter with Pembina. Would it fall north or south of the line? If south, it would be in foreign territory, the territory of the United States, and the mission had been founded under English auspices and under the jurisdiction of the Quebec Diocese.

The work at Pembina went on. The timbers for the missionary's residence as well as those for another small house were cut and part of them in place. The timbers for the chapel were made ready. As poor as the mission was and as great as the need for mission and school effects, Father Dumoulin had his cassock burned accidentally when a live coal from the fireplace fell on it. On Palm Sunday, oak branches were blessed instead of palm, for, as Father Dumoulin wrote, there was no olive, palm, cedar or fir obtainable.⁴¹ On June 30, 1819, Bishop Plessis wrote to Father Dumoulin:

It seems evident by all reports that the establishment at Pembina will prove better than that at the Forks; but (1) the estates of the mission are at the Forks; (2) a treaty between England and the United States of which perhaps you are ignorant since it was agreed to only on October 20, 1818, gives to the latter all lands south of the 49th degree of latitude, from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. Now it is certain that the Forks is to the north of this degree of latitude, and it is probable that Pembina is south of it, consequently in the United States and beyond my jurisdiction. That ought to moderate your zeal, although in virtue of the powers which I have received from the Bishop of Louisiana, I may be able to authorize you, as I am doing at present, and also Father Provencher and those who may join you later, to exercise faculties in this territory. . . . I approve of the choice made of St. Francis Xavier as patron of the mission. As to the intention of the subscribers, that should not trouble you since Pembina was part of the region to which you were to carry the light of the Gospel.⁴²

⁴¹ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, April 3, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴² Il paraît évident que l'établissement de Pembina vaudra, bien mieux que celui de la Fourche, sous tous les rapports; mais 1o. les propriétés de la mission sont à la Fourche; 2o. un traité dont vous n'avez peut-être

Father Provencher gave consideration to the boundary question in relation to the Pembina mission; but he decided that the work on the missionary's residence, delayed for lack of nails, must be hurried in order that it might be habitable by winter. Part of it could then be used for the missionary, the other part would serve as a temporary chapel until the new one was finished. There were too many people at Pembina to think of abandoning the work of salvation unless there was no alternative. The work on the chapel was to be continued also unless the colonists should decide not to remain at Pembina.⁴³ Father Dumoulin, assured by Mr. McGillivray, the principal agent for the Northwest Company, that the boundary line would be drawn through the mouth of the Pembina River, informed Bishop Plessis that without a doubt the mission buildings in process of erection were within the territory under the jurisdiction of the Quebec Diocese.⁴⁴

Father Dumoulin, who had spent part of the summer of 1819 at Rainy Lake, returned to Pembina to take up his duties there. Here Father Provencher joined him. The two mission-

pas connoissance, parce qu'il n'a été fait que le 20 8bre dernier entre l'Angleterre et les Etats Unis, donne à ceux-ci tout ce qui est au Sud du 49e degré de latitude, depuis l'angle du lac des bois le plus à l'ouest jusqu'aux montagnes de Roches. Or la Fourche est certainement au nord de ce degré, et il est probable que Pembina en est au sud, par conséquent aux Etats Unis et hors de ma juridiction. Voilà qui doit modérer votre ardeur, quoiqu'en vertu des pouvoirs que j'ai reçus de Monseigneur l'Evêque de la Louisiane, je puisse vous autoriser, comme je le fais par la présente, ainsi que Monsr Provencher et ceux qui se joindront à vous par la suite, à exercer dans ce territoire. . . . J'approuve le choix fait de St François Xavier pour titulaire de cette mission. Quant à l'intention des souscripteurs, ce n'est pas ce qui devrait vous gêner puisque Punbina (*sic*) fait partie de la région vers laquelle vous deviez porter les lumières de l'Evangile.—Letter of Bishop Plessis to Father Dumoulin, Quebec, June 30, 1819. Original in Archbishopal Archives of Quebec.

⁴³ Letter of Father Provencher to Lady Selkirk, St. Boniface, July 29, 1819, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 751, 6372-6374 (transcript); *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 38 f.

⁴⁴ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Rainy Lake, July 27, 1819 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

aries with William Edge applied themselves to the study of the Chippewa language, with the hope that the success of their ministration might be greater. Father Provencher returned to Fort Douglas at Easter time, 1820.⁴⁵ It was decided that Father Provencher and William Edge go to Quebec during the summer. The former would report on the western missions and then return, while Edge, whom Father Provencher did not consider eminently fitted for the missionary field, would turn to other work. Father Dumoulin was to spend some time during the summer at Hudson Bay.⁴⁶

Lady Selkirk's interest in the western missions, as manifested by her bounty, was appreciated by the missionaries and their ordinary. The latter, in a letter expressing his gratitude to her, said: "Last summer Father Dumoulin wrote me that he had conferred the sacrament of baptism on sixty adults at Pembina. Thanks to your generous gifts, the chapels are enriched with linen and ornaments—divine service is conducted in a fitting manner, and the half-breeds have learned to sing the praises of God, Who a few years ago was unknown to them."⁴⁷

Father Provencher and William Edge left Red River on August 16, 1820, and were in Montreal within a month. Father Thomas Destroismaisons⁴⁸ and Mr. J. Sauvez, who ar-

⁴⁵ *Op Cit.*; Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop de Saldes, Pembina, January 30, 1820; Letter of Father Provencher to the same, Red River, May 23, 1820 (transcripts), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴⁶ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 42, 45; Letters of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, May 17, 1820, and St. Boniface, August 25, 1820 (transcripts), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴⁷ "M. Dumoulin m'écrivait l'été dernier que dans le seul poste de Pembina il avait conféré le baptême à 60 grandes personnes. Grâce à vos généreuses offrandes, les chapelles se trouvent garnies de linge et d'ornements—le service divin s'y fait avec beaucoup de décence et les Bois-Brûlés ont appris à chanter les louanges de Dieu qui peu d'années auparavant leur était inconnu."—Letter of Bishop Plessis to Lady Selkirk, Quebec, May 2, 1821, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 754, 7246-7247 (transcript).

⁴⁸ Thomas Destroismaisons was born at St. Peter, Province of Quebec, January 12, 1796. He was ordained October 17, 1819. He spent the time

rived at Red River four days before the departure of Provencher, were left in charge—Father Destroismaisons of the mission of St. Boniface at Fort Douglas and Sauvez in Edge's school at Pembina.⁴⁹ At the suggestion of Dumoulin, Father Destroismaisons went to Pembina for the greater part of the winter of 1820-1821, and spent much of his time studying the Chippewa language. Only a few of his flock remained at St. Boniface during the winter in search of game. Nearly all had gone to Pembina or the prairie.⁵⁰ Father Dumoulin continued in his efforts to prevail upon the Indians to give up their nomadic life and settle permanently in villages where it would be possible to reach them and establish churches and schools among them.⁵¹

The harvest of 1820 was good notwithstanding a grasshopper plague. Four barrels of wheat, eight of oats, three of peas, seven of barley, and eight pecks of potatoes were the fruits of the agricultural labors of the colony. The spiritual harvest was greater. There were two hundred and sixty-seven baptisms, forty-five marriages and twenty-three burials recorded on the Pembina Mission Register up to the feast of the Epiphany, 1821.⁵² The good work for the salvation of souls continued to bear results, for, less than five months later, the same register showed three hundred and thirteen baptisms, fifty-three marriages and thirty-one burials.⁵³ The school begun by William Edge was continued by Sauvez, who wrote to Father Proven-

from 1820 to 1827 as a missionary at Red River. In 1827, he returned to Quebec. He died April 5, 1866. Tanguay, *Répertoire Général du Clergé Canadien*, 168.

⁴⁹ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 45.

⁵⁰ Letter of Father Destroismaisons to Bishop Plessis, St. Boniface, January 3, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵¹ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, January 6, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵² *Op. Cit.*

⁵³ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, May 25, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

cher at Yamachiche, where he was in residence until his return to the West, asking that grammars, primers, epitomes, and other standard books as well as books of devotion be sent to Pembina. Five of the pupils were studying Latin. Before the end of January, the pupils were to be publicly examined before the leading men of the colony. Then Father Dumoulin would be free for a fortnight or a month to instruct the Indians and become more proficient in their language.⁵⁴

Though the question of the civil jurisdiction was unsettled, there was every indication that Pembina would fall within the United States; yet Father Dumoulin in his zeal for his infant mission would not give up the idea that it belonged to England and looked forward to making greater improvements as the years passed. To insure the permanence of the mission, he wrote⁵⁵ in March, 1821, to Andrew Colville, executor of the Selkirk estate, asking for a gift of land for the mission. Informing him of the progress of the mission, he said that the church would be usable in eight days, that a house had been built, that two other edifices had been erected, and that plans were ready for a schoolhouse. Mass was celebrated in the church at Pembina by Father Dumoulin for the first time on Pentecost Sunday, 1821. The pews were sold and netted the mission an income of about eleven hundred dollars. A number of nominal Protestants, resident at Pembina, took pews for their children who had become Catholics.⁵⁶

Both Father Dumoulin and Mr. Sauvez were interested in the agricultural development of the region. Although Sauvez was daily occupied with teaching the half-breed children, he

⁵⁴ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 56; Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, January 6, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵⁵ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Andrew Colville, Pembina, March 29, 1821, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 754, 7281-7282 (transcript).

⁵⁶ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, n. p., n. d. (must be about the first of June, 1821, and from Pembina), (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

found time, in the spring of 1821, to plant a small garden with all kinds of seeds which were very plentiful and good in the colony that year.⁵⁷ Father Dumoulin succeeded in getting the Chippewa Indians, who had settled in groups in four small villages, to sow grain. The chief location was on the Roseau River where Father Dumoulin had baptized a number of Indian children. Pembina had been free from the grasshopper scourge which devastated the colony at Fort Douglas in 1820, and, at the time of the sowing in 1821, there seemed to be no reason to expect a loss of the crop.⁵⁸

Bishop Plessis had learned that the death of Lord Selkirk, which had occurred on April 8, 1820,⁵⁹ had changed the attitude of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was not favorable to the extension of the Catholic faith in the Northwest. Lord Selkirk's associates, however, seemed more favorably inclined since they had been convinced of the good results of the missionary work going on in the Red River settlement. Because of conditions, Bishop Plessis advised the forming of a class of boys of marked intelligence and inclination to piety who might become laborers in the Lord's vineyard in the Northwest. He advised that the work of organizing this group be confided to the care of Mr. Sauvez until the time of Bishop Provencher's⁶⁰ return to Red River. He advised also that the education of these boys be carried on at St. Boniface in preference to Pembina, which might have to be abandoned, as a careful study of

⁵⁷ Letter of Mr. Sauvez to Father Rimbault, Pembina, May 28, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵⁸ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, St. Boniface, August 16, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵⁹ Letter of Andrew Colville to Thomas Clark, London, April 28, 1820, Selkirk Papers, Series M. 752, 6835-6836 (transcript).

⁶⁰ After leaving Red River, Father Provencher received his appointment as bishop with Juliopolis as his titular see and was consecrated May 12, 1822. He left for the West shortly after, arriving at Fort Douglas August 7, 1822.—*Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 46, 63, 66, 75.

a map of 1817 led him to believe that Pembina would be south of the line established by the boundary compromise of 1818.⁶¹

Twice Father Dumoulin's life was endangered during his residence at Pembina, when, in 1820 and again in the spring of 1821, an Indian attempted to kill him. Although the culprit was apprehended and put in irons, he succeeded in making his escape, to the satisfaction of his intended victim.⁶²

Father Dumoulin went to St. Boniface on June 25, 1821. Finally, he was convinced that his mission was on American soil. Hence, he made several attempts to communicate with Bishop Dubourg of Louisiana, under whose jurisdiction the mission had thus fallen. These attempts at communication had been unsuccessful because American traders, who would have acted as his messengers, ceased to come as far north as formerly, because of trouble with the Sioux.⁶³

There was some falling off in attendance at the mission school; yet there were fifteen children in regular attendance, besides a considerable number of children of Protestant parentage, who were being raised in the Catholic faith.⁶⁴ Father Destroismaisons reckoned that there were about four hundred and fifty Catholics and fifty catechumens at Pembina toward the end of August, 1821. At this time grave fears were entertained for the hunters. The buffaloes were at a great distance from the mission. The Sioux and the Chippewa had gotten into difficulties at Fort Douglas. In vengeance, the Sioux had threatened to prevent settlers from obtaining food.⁶⁵ Thus, the winter of 1821 was a time of suffering, as the colo-

⁶¹ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Father Dumoulin, Quebec, April 10, 1821. Original in Archbishopal Archives of Quebec.

⁶² Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, May 25, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁶³ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, St. Boniface, August 16, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁶⁴ *Op. Cit.*

⁶⁵ Letter of Father Destroismaisons to Bishop Plessis, St. Boniface, August 30, 1821 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

nists were unable to lay in provisions. One hundred and fifty Swiss, who had just joined the colony, endured great misery and privation. Most of the seed intended for the spring sowing was eaten. Hardships and difficulties paralyzed the temporal and spiritual progress of the colony and mission. During this time, Father Destroismaisons had again spent a month at Pembina.⁶⁶

Bishop Provencher arrived at St. Boniface August 7, 1822, accompanied by John Harper. During his absence, John Halkett, the brother-in-law of the late Earl of Selkirk, had visited the Forks and Pembina, but had taken his departure fifteen days before the return of Bishop Provencher. Father Dumoulin to his distress found Halkett determined upon the complete evacuation of both post and mission. Halkett, before his departure, left a letter for delivery to Bishop Provencher on his return,⁶⁷ in which he expressed his views concerning Pembina. He said that he felt that the Pembina settlement had turned the buffaloes from the plains near the Forks and that no grant of land nor legal title would be given at Pembina. He added, "It was certainly much to be wished that the Roman Catholic Mission had not extended itself so soon into that country under the circumstances of the Red River settlement but that the great expense incurred by it at Pembina ought to have been rather laid out in the improving and rendering more comfortable their present residence & possessions at the Forks, & in encouraging the cultivation & peopling of their large property at that place & in adding by that means to the strength & prosperity of this infant colony."⁶⁸ Bishop Provencher replied that it would be no easy matter to abandon Pembina, but it might be done by degrees. There could be no possibility of

⁶⁶ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, Pembina, March 20, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁶⁷ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 75.

⁶⁸ Letter of Mr. Halkett to Bishop Provencher, Forks, Red River, July 20, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

evacuating Pembina immediately because the people from there would not come to the Forks, where they would die of starvation for lack of provisions. Under existing conditions, it would be absolutely necessary for some of the settlers at the Forks to go to Pembina in order to live. The coming spring would be the earliest possible moment when Pembina could be permanently relinquished. He assured Halkett that, in the meantime, he would make an effort to persuade the people of Pembina that it was necessary to abandon the settlement on the American side of the boundary. He would show that they were in the neighborhood of the hostile Sioux who were maltreating the white inhabitants. He recalled to Halkett's attention the early approval by the agents of the colony of the plan for settling at Pembina and establishing its mission. His attention was also directed to the expense incurred by the mission in the cultivation of fields and in the erection of buildings in a country where it was difficult and costly to construct even the poorest of buildings. The bishop believed that it would have been more satisfactory if Halkett had made known his wishes directly to the people of Pembina as he recalled the missionary.⁶⁹

Father Dumoulin was disheartened at the turn of affairs. It seemed to him that, if men of Halkett's principles and opinions controlled the colony, further progress would be impossible. Zealous as he was, the missionary was willing to return to Canada and never again take up his labors in the Northwest.⁷⁰ Many of the settlers, too, had gone to considerable expense in preparing homes for themselves, as up to the time of Halkett's visit there had been no doubt as to the permanence of the colony. To evacuate Pembina according to the wishes of Halkett would leave the colonists more destitute than on their arrival. As more money had been expended on the Pembina mission with

⁶⁹ Letter of Bishop Provencher to Mr. Halkett, Red River, August 10, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁷⁰ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, St. Boniface, August 11, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

its advantageous location than the one at the Forks, if provision were made to form a new settlement across the boundary from the old, it might be possible and desirable to transport the church to the new location.⁷¹

Mr. Halkett took up the matter of evacuating Pembina with Bishop Plessis, expressing himself in no uncertain terms:

It has been determined both by those who have the management of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, and also by the executors of the late Earl of Selkirk, that their respective forts or buildings at Pembina should be immediately and totally abandoned. Upon this subject I may also be permitted frankly to express my opinion, that the Roman Catholic Mission at the Red River, having so long left unfinished their church at the Forks, having permitted their house of residence there to continue incomplete and dismantled to the present moment, having established no schools, nor attempted any improvement or settlement of the extensive grant of lands given them by Lord Selkirk, they ought never to have set about building and completing a distant church and residence at Pembina. The measure which they thus hastily and prematurely adopted has unfortunately tended to unhinge and disperse the Red River population, and it has evidently served but to encourage the half-breeds and others to continue in that idle and disorderly mode of life to which I am sorry to say they are at present but too generally addicted (*sic*).⁷²

The settlement at Pembina prior to the advent of the missionaries, the ravages of the grasshoppers at the Forks, the nomadic life of the tribesmen seem to have been overlooked conveniently enough by Halkett. Bishop Plessis's reply was no less pointed:

. . . I must own that when the first missionaries were sent up to Red River, in 1818, one establishment only (namely that of the Forks) was in contemplation, and that it was a matter of surprise for me to hear that they had extended as far as Pembina. They however justified that measure by alledging (*sic*) that the settlers had from themselves fled to that new settlement as being nearer to the Buffalo, that the Forks were infested and impoverished by the unexpected irruption of locusts,

⁷¹ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 76.

⁷² Letter of Mr. Halkett to Bishop Plessis, York Factory, Hudson's Bay, August 26, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

that the whole of the colony could not be maintained on the same spot without danger of starvation, finally that the then Governors did not object against the division of the colony. . . . I do not hesitate . . . to assure you of the speedy removal of the mission of Pembina as early in the next spring as possible. . . .⁷³

Meantime, Mr. Sauvez closed his career as a schoolmaster, to the regret of his half-breed and white pupils at Pembina. With Bishop Provencher's consent he returned to Montreal. Few pupils were left at the time of his departure. The colony was without food, and the settlers were on the move in search of game and supplies.⁷⁴ Father Dumoulin had accompanied the hunters to the prairie. Pembina was practically deserted. The half-breeds had been obliged to go in larger numbers this year in order to protect themselves from the Sioux. Father Dumoulin continued to instruct new candidates for baptism and celebrated Mass on the prairie each Sunday. His is the distinction of being the first missionary on the prairie within the present area of the Dakotas.⁷⁵ The prairie had been ravaged by fire and hence yielded less game than was necessary for the support of the colony. Father Dumoulin had planted a garden in the spring and to some extent supplied the deficiency of the hunt. There had been a good yield of vegetables. In addition to the hunt and to raising vegetables, Father Dumoulin had other economic interests. The only chickens in the colony were owned by him. He had imported sheep, also. He employed a tradesman to look after the business interests of the colony.⁷⁶

About November 10, 1822, the half-breeds left the colony to go into winter quarters. From the feast of All Saints up to the time of their departure, fifty of them had received Holy

⁷³ Letter of Bishop Plessis to Mr. Halkett, Quebec, January 23, 1823 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁷⁴ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 77; Letter of Mr. Sauvez to Bishop Plessis, Montreal, October 15, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁷⁵ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 77 f.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 80; Letter of Father Dumoulin to Archbishop Plessis, Pembina, November 13, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

Communion. As the mission register recorded three hundred and ninety-four baptisms, sixty-eight marriages and forty-nine burials from the time of the founding of the mission to November 13, 1822, Father Dumoulin felt that the spiritual welfare of the mission was increasing, but he could not say as much for the temporal progress.⁷⁷

When Father Dumoulin, late in the fall, informed the settlers at Pembina that the mission and colony must be abandoned in the spring of 1823, disapproval was manifested by all. The people were discontented at the thought of losing their total investment; but the Hudson's Bay Company had ordered all trade stopped and had threatened to shut off all supplies for the colony in 1823 ⁷⁸ so that there was little else to be done. When spring came, Bishop Provencher and Father Dumoulin succeeded in persuading the people to depart, but vainly did they attempt to prevail upon them to go to the Forks and take up permanent residence there. Instead, they camped along the banks of the Red River awaiting the hunting season. With the close of the Pembina mission, Father Dumoulin went to St. Boniface's where he remained until July 19, 1823, when he departed for Montreal after five laborious years of sacrifice in the region. His work among Indians, whites, and half-breeds so ably and zealously begun and carried on by him seemed completed when his mission was closed. Bishop Provencher grieved that the spiritual progress of Father Dumoulin's neophytes would suffer in consequence of his departure.

Many half-breeds, who returned to Pembina and took up their residence in the abandoned houses, hoped that, since Father Dumoulin would not and could not return to them, a missionary from the United States might take up his labors where he left off. Bishop Provencher had hoped to sell the missionary's house to the governor of the colony, but the governor had left Pembina with the colonists. There had been a possibility that a new mission might be established across the boundary a few

⁷⁷ *Op. Cit.*

⁷⁸ *Op. Cit.*

leagues from Pembina, and it was thought that the chapel might be transported thither. But the squatters who had returned to Pembina would not permit the removal of either the chapel or house of the missionary.⁷⁹ Missionaries from St. Boniface did continue to visit Pembina from time to time to care for these half-breeds. For instance, Father Destroismaisons went several times between the time of Father Dumoulin's departure and June of 1824. And the missionaries found the old settlement prosperous, for the buffaloes had been on the prairie in great numbers during the winter and thus the people were well supplied with food.⁸⁰ In December, 1826, Father John Harper went to Pembina and from there southward to Grand Forks to look after the spiritual needs of the Catholics in the two localities. Meanwhile, Bishop Provencher had been appointed vicar general to the Bishop of Louisiana in order that he might carry on his missionary labors in the northern part of Minnesota and the Dakotas. Still, when the mission at White Horse Plains on the Canadian side of the line was opened under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier in 1829, all hope was abandoned for the immediate reëstablishment of Pembina.⁸¹

Major Stephen Long was authorized by the War Department in April, 1823, to lead an expedition up the Minnesota River, down the Red River to the parallel of 49° North Latitude and east along the boundary line to Lake Superior. He visited Pembina in August, 1823, and found the chapel falling into ruin. He noted that there were about three hundred and fifty persons, of whom two-thirds were half-breeds, who, educated by their mothers, had imbibed the roving and unsettled habits of the Indians. Of the sixty houses which he found there, only one was on the Canadian side of the boundary.⁸² Giacomo Con-

⁷⁹ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Archbishop Plessis, Sault Ste. Marie, August 24, 1823 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 82, 88-90, 96.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 93 f.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, III, 116, 127.

⁸² Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Sources of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods*, II, 38 f., 43.

stantino Beltrami,⁸³ who made a tour through the region in the same year, part of the time in Long's party, wrote to a friend that the departure of the missionary from Pembina "is the more to be regretted as not only does it deprive these regions of every source of instruction which could be derived from these ecclesiastics alone, but the *Bois-brulés* will relapse into their former state of barbarism, by losing whatever good they have gained from their evangelical precepts."⁸⁴ In the Journal of Reverend William T. Boutwell,⁸⁵ a member of the Schoolcraft party when an expedition was made through Minnesota in 1832, is found this entry for June 25, 1832: "A few years since, a priest was located at Pembina near Mr. A's post. He formed a ch[urch] there which is now extinct. The influence still lives however & for want of a priest the half-breeds & a few Inds. in his vicinity go to the settlement."⁸⁶

⁸³ Beltrami, who at this time may have been a political refugee, was at one time an officer in the Italian army. He was a man of means. He had come to Minnesota for the purpose, as he claimed, of discovering the source of the Mississippi River.

⁸⁴ Beltrami, *Pilgrimage*, II, 355.

⁸⁵ Reverend William T. Boutwell was sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He left the Schoolcraft party at La Pointe in 1832. He labored among the Indians at La Pointe, Leech Lake, and Fond du Lac.

⁸⁶ Journal of Rev. W. T. Boutwell, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, MSS., 74, No. 83 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

CHAPTER III

CHIPPEWA MISSIONS ON LAKE SUPERIOR, 1835-1864

The work begun so zealously by Father Claude Allouez among the Chippewa Indians at the head of Lake Superior was not continued. The Chippewa, who before the time of Father Allouez's visit to them had penetrated to the west of the lake, continued their struggles with the Sioux and extended their domain westward and southward. No other missionary worked among them until after the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Father Frederic Baraga,¹ a Slovenian by birth, left his native Carniola in Austria to convert the Indians in the wilds of North America. On his arrival in the United States, Bishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati, to whose diocese he was transferred, assigned him to the care of the Indians, half-breeds, and settlers around Lake Superior, and he left Cincinnati for his mission, April 21, 1831. Baraga, a linguist of no mean ability, was especially fitted for such work. Upon his arrival among the Indians of Lake Superior, he set about learning the Indian language. So apt was he at this self-imposed task, that he began with the aid of an interpreter to compile a prayer book and a catechism in the language of these dwellers

¹ Bishop Frederic Baraga was born June 29, 1797, in the parish of Dobernitz, diocese of Laibach, Carniola, Austria (at the present time the diocese of Ljubljana, Slovenia, Jugoslavia). He studied law in Vienna and, immediately upon the completion of his law studies, entered the seminary of the diocese of Laibach to begin his theological studies. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1823. Leaving Carniola November 12, 1830, he arrived at Cincinnati, January 18, 1831. When the Vicariate Apostolic of Upper Michigan was erected, Father Baraga was named bishop with Amazonia as his titular see. He was consecrated by Archbishop Purcell in the Cathedral of Cincinnati, November 1, 1853. When the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette was erected, Bishop Baraga was assigned it as his see. He died January 20, 1868.—*Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung im Kaiserserthume Oesterreich*, I, 9; II, 10; IV, 5; *Ave Maria*, IV, 91 f.; *Dictionary of American Biography*, I, 584 f.

of the woods and on August 29, 1832, a little more than a year after his arrival at Lake Superior, he was in Detroit getting the prayer book and catechism printed.²

On July 27, 1835, Father Baraga arrived at La Pointe, Lake Superior, to establish a new station. This was a stepping-stone to the foundation of a mission among the Chippewa ninety miles to the west, at the head of Lake Superior. Father Baraga had learned that these Indians at Fond du Lac had been partially instructed by a fur trader, Pierre Cotté, who had spoken to them

² The following letter to John Gilmary Shea in the Shea Collection, Georgetown University Archives 41: 5, lists the works of Bishop Baraga in the Indian language:

Dear Sir,

By some circumstance or other your esteemed note of last July came to my hands only yesterday.

If it is not too late, I will give you, according to your wish a list of my works and when and where published.

My first Indian work I wrote at L'Arbre-croche, Emmet County, Mich., and published it in Detroit in 1832. It was a prayerbook, a hymnbook and a catechism, all in one volume. Subsequently I published, likewise in Detroit, four editions of this work, for our Indian Missions.

My second Indian work was an Extract of the Bible of the Old and New Testaments, containing the Life of Jesus Christ, and the Epistles and Gospels of the whole year; published in Detroit and in Laibach, Austria, in 1837, and the second edition in 1846.

The third work was a volume of 712 pages, Instructions and Meditations on all the doctrines of the Catholic Church; published in Detroit in 1849.

The fourth work was the Grammar of the Chippeway language; a complete Grammar of it, in a volume of 576 pages; published in Detroit in 1849.

The fifth, a dictionary of the same language, 662 pages, very small type, minion; published in Cincinnati, 1852.

I also wrote 6 works in the Illyrian language, which is my mother tongue; and one in German, on the Indians. This was translated in Illyrian and in French. Its title would be in English: History, Character and Habits of the North American Indians. It was printed in Laibach, Austria, in 1837; and the French translation in Paris, in the same year.

It seems to me you wish to know the Indian titles of my works. The title of the first is: *Anamie Masinagan*; of the second: *Gcte Dibadjimowin, gaie Jesus o bimadisiwin oma aking*; of the third, *Katolik Enamiad o nanagatawendamowinan*.

of the Catholic religion and of priests.³ Some idea of the part Cotté took in the conversion of the Indians may be gleaned from entries in the *Journal* ⁴ of Reverend Edmund F. Ely, who was sent out to this region by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions:

This morning Mr. Cottee—read Catholic prayers—but I was ignorant of it. Why he did not invite me to be present, I know not. . . . This Evening, I informed Mr. C. that I intended to sing with those of my Scholars & others, who have come. He invited me to his house. When we entered, the room was filled. He said he would first say Prayers—accordingly, the Catholic service was read, in which the Indians and Children joined. They then Spent ½ an hour or more in Singing Catholic Hymns,—& then told me there was an opportunity for my Children to Sing. . . . Mr Cottee informs me that he expects a Teacher (doubtless Catholic)—from the Sault, to open a School here. He has been very busily Employed during the last fall & winter in instructing the Indians in the Catholic Religion. . . . Mr. C. told me that some of the Men had cut their Hair—& broken their Drums—thereby renouncing paganism & embracing Catholicism.⁵ . . . This Eve—Mr. Cotte Called me in to his house—saying several Indians were there—to hear the Scriptures in Ojibue.⁶ . . . Attended M. Cottes Service.⁷ . . . This morning at Breakfast, Mr. Cotte called in—among other things, he asked me if I kept Christmas? When answered in the negative, he said I sinned if I did not—because it was “Kiji anomiegi-shik”—“the great Sabbath.” Without openly combating the Catholic belief on the point, I defended myself from the imputation. He confessed that there was neither Precept nor Example for it in Scripture—but based it upon Respect to C.⁸ . . . This Evening Mons. Cotte re-

The Grammar and the Dictionary have English titles.

This is all, sir, you wished to know of my little works. And now God's blessing to you.

Yours respectfully

✠ Frederic Baraga

Bishop, and V. A. of Upper Michigan

Saut St. Mary Sept. 19, 1854.

³ *Berichte*, IX, 53-56.

⁴ There is a transcript of this *Journal* in the Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵ Entry in *Journal*, June 8, 1834.

⁶ *Ibid.*, September 17, 1834.

⁷ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1834.

⁸ *Ibid.*, September 27, 1834.

quested me to desist praying in their meeting & after reading. For himself—he said my prayers were very good—but I did not make the cross—did not love it—and the Catholic Indians would not stay in the room when I prayed, (this I have observed—once or twice but did not know the Cause). They did not wish to learn any other prayers. He wished all the exercises might be as usual, except, that when it was time for my accustomed prayer, that I would retire & offer it somewhere else. He reminded me that all the Children were Catholic Children, & did not wish I should teach them otherwise—as also the Praying Indians—did not wish me to mention the subject to them.⁹ . . . Read at Mr. Cottes.¹⁰ . . . This Eve read as usual. . . . As I came home, the air resounded with the Songs of two Lodges of Catholic Indians. It was delightful to hear their Voices attuned to the music of civilized life.¹¹ . . . No School. This is Kiji Anomiegizhigot with the Catholics—two Sabbaths together¹² this year. Services as usual this morning at M. Cotte's.¹³ . . . This day I have observed as a day of Worship. The Catholics have had Service as on the Sabbath.¹⁴ . . . Services as usual. . . . Mr. A. intimated to me this P. M. that Mr. Cotte might not remain here another Year—as his term of Contract expires this coming Spring—and expressed a doubt whether he Mr. A. should be willing to contract further—but sustain the trade of the Post himself.—Mr. C. has for a few years past, purchased goods of the Company & traded on his own responsibility. If this arrangement takes place, it may have a very important bearing on the Prospects of our Mission here.—The *Pillar* of Catholicism will be removed. Let me acknowledge the Hand of God in it, if it takes place—if not—let me not be discouraged.¹⁵ . . . Mr. Cotte's Services have been well attended today. I suppose near 50 were present.¹⁶ . . . Mrs. C. took a Cup of Water & baptized the child, making the Cross on its forehead—repeating over it the name of the Father, Son & Spirit.¹⁷ . . . I brought a Letter & a packet of Crosses—from Le Pointe—from the Cath. Priest at Sault—to Mons. Cotte—by whh he learns that the Priest intends visiting this place in summer. The Indians are daily asking me if it is so—and I

⁹ *Ibid.*, October 15, 1834.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, October 25, 1834.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, October 28, 1834.

¹² The feast of All Saints fell on Saturday.

¹³ Entry in *Journal*, November 1, 1834.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, December 25, 1834.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Sunday, March 1, 1835.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, February 15, 1835.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1835.

expressed my ignorance & refer them to M. Cotte. I presume that many of them think that I am of the same faith of the Catholics. I have never attempted to tell them the Contrary.¹⁸ . . .

Father Baraga visited Fond du Lac for the first time in September, 1835, and found on his arrival that all the Christians were assembled in the spacious house of Pierre Cotté. At his entrance, all knelt and asked his blessing. Father Baraga found many among them sufficiently instructed by Cotté for the reception of baptism. During the preceding year, one of Father Baraga's Indian prayer books had fallen into the trader's hands. With this as an aid, he invited the Indians to his house and taught them to sing the hymns which the prayer book contained. He set these to familiar French airs. The Indians enjoyed this so thoroughly that it was not unusual for them to remain with him until midnight singing the hymns he had taught them. When Cotté perceived their zeal, he began to instruct them in the catechism, as a supplement to the prayer book, and to teach them the morning and evening prayers. The missionary baptized those who were prepared, with the exception of sixteen persons who were absent from the post at the time.¹⁹

On May 26, 1836, Father Baraga set out for a second visit of fourteen days' duration among the Indians at Fond du Lac. He marvelled that his converts of the year before should remain such zealous Christians without the aid of a resident missionary even though Pierre Cotté was still carrying on his missionary work among them. Fourteen Indians, including the chief and his family, who had been previously instructed, presented themselves for baptism. Before the departure of Father Baraga for La Pointe, the chief with some of the warriors came to the missionary and begged him to remain permanently in their midst, but their request could not be granted.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1835.

¹⁹ *Berichte*, IX, 57-60; Baptismal Register of Bishop Baraga, August 2, 1835, to March 6, 1860. Original in Catholic Church Archives of Bayfield, Wisconsin.

Father Baraga consoled them, however, by promising to do all in his power to procure a resident missionary. They were so overjoyed at the thought of the establishment of a permanent mission that they showed Father Baraga the site for the future mission church and mission house. There was every indication that the tribe would be converted within a short time, if it were possible to station a priest among them.²⁰

When Baraga made the promise to the Indians, he was confident that it could be fulfilled within a short time. Father Francis Pierz,²¹ who had arrived in Detroit the previous year, had been assigned to the Fond du Lac mission. As no opportunity presented itself for him to make the journey to the head of Lake Superior in 1835, he spent the winter at Arbre Croche, the present Harbor Springs, Michigan, among the Ottawa Indians. In the spring, his appointment was changed. The Indians at Fond du Lac were disappointed, for no other missionary was appointed to establish a permanent mission among them.²²

Father Baraga visited Fond du Lac again in the summer of 1838.²³ From this time up to his removal to L'Anse mission in Michigan, there appears to be no record of the number of his

²⁰ *Berichte*, X, 38-40.

²¹ Father Francis Pierz was born in Godic, Carniola, Austria (now Slovenia, Jugoslavia), November 20, 1785. He received his elementary and secondary education in Godic, Kamnik and Laibach. In 1810 he entered the seminary of Laibach to begin his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1813. Twenty-two years later, in the fiftieth year of his age, he left his native land to sail for America to devote his life to the conversion of the Indians. On September 18, 1835, he arrived at Detroit. In 1852, he asked to be transferred from the Detroit Diocese to the diocese of St. Paul. He labored among the Indians, half-breeds, and white settlers in the St. Paul Diocese until 1873. In this year, he returned to his native country to spend his last days. He died at Laibach, January 22, 1880.—*Acta et Dicta*, III, 66 ff.

²² *Berichte*, X, 39.

²³ Letter of Frederick Ayer to David Greene, Fond du Lac, October 8, 1838, Am. Bd. of Comm. for For. Missions, MSS. 141, No. 194 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

visits to Fond du Lac,²⁴ though he speaks of having been there occasionally.²⁵ Reverend B. T. Kavanaugh, Methodist missionary, wrote in 1842 that the Catholics at Fond du Lac were occasionally visited by a priest from La Pointe: "These have to some degree influenced some of the Indians favorable (*sic*) to Catholicism. . . . Had the priest not interfered and interdicted their attending our meetings, we, in all probability, would have taken most of them into our church."²⁶ Father Otto Skolla,²⁷ Baraga's successor at La Pointe, wrote, at the request of his superior, a *Relation* of his labors in the area of Minnesota and Wisconsin. He notes in reference to Father Baraga at Fond du Lac, "Before I had moved to La Pointe, Father Baraga himself also frequently visited these Christians and prepared them for the worthy reception of the sacraments."²⁸ Bishop Henni of Milwaukee, while on a visit to

²⁴ His Baptismal Register shows records of Fond du Lac baptisms in 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1854, 1860.

²⁵ "schon öfters."—*Berichte*, XIX, 98.

²⁶ *Christian Advocate and Journal*, XVI, 182.

²⁷ Father Otto Skolla was born at Rudolfswert, Carniola, Austria, November 3, 1805. He made his elementary and collegiate studies under the direction of the Friars Minor. In 1827, he entered the Order of Friars Minor and four years later was ordained to the priesthood. From youth he had desired to labor in the foreign mission field. After hearing of the mission labors of Father Baraga among the Indians of the Northwest, he offered himself to Father Baraga as co-laborer in the Indian missions. In August, 1840, the desired permission from the Bishop of Detroit to take up his work in the Detroit Diocese was received through a letter written to Father Skolla by Father Baraga. With the permission of his superiors, he left Carniola in 1841 for the United States. After a winter spent in New York with a member of his Order, Father Ivo Levitz, he arrived in Detroit, May 15, 1842. He expected to take up his work immediately among the Indians, but he did not receive his appointment to devote full time to his work until 1845. He labored among the Chippewa Indians until 1853 and among the Menominee Indians until 1858, when he returned to Europe. He died at Tersat, near Fiume, April 1, 1879.—*La Palestina*, (1891), 51, 72 ff.; *Franciscan Herald*, VII, 144, 185.

²⁸ "Ipse etiam D. Baraga, antequam ego ad ripam Lapointe admovissem, frequenter invisit hos christicolos, et praeparavit eos ad digne suscipienda sacra salutis mysteria."—*La Palestina* (1891), 160.

La Pointe, August 14, 1844, was prevented by difficulties of travel from going to Fond du Lac, concerning which he has written: "This mission was abandoned shortly after it was founded because the Reverend Baraga moved to L'Once (L'Anse), and is now constrained to restrict his labors to this mission."²⁹

The Leopoldine Society of Vienna sent some financial assistance to Father Baraga at L'Anse in 1845. After paying his debts, the missionary found there were sufficient funds left to erect two small mission churches. Fond du Lac was to have one of these. Father Baraga signed a contract for its erection to cost three hundred dollars. In order to make the necessary arrangements, he planned to leave L'Anse on the fourth of February, the next year, and return before the end of March. His plans, however, were altered somewhat by the arrival of Father Skolla at L'Anse in September, 1845. Baraga accompanied Father Skolla to the scene of his future labors at La Pointe, where they arrived October 3, 1845. With Skolla at La Pointe, Baraga believed that after all arrangements would be completed in Fond du Lac for the erection of the church in February, 1846, it would not be necessary for him to make another journey there. This visit, in February, 1846, added five names to his Baptismal Register.³⁰

La Pointe was at this time no longer under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Detroit, but was now under the newly erected Milwaukee Diocese (1844). Father Skolla asked for and received his transfer from Detroit. On April 27, 1846, he, accompanied by an interpreter and some half-breeds, went to Fond du Lac. A number of the Indian converts assembled on the shore to greet him. His first visit was to the hut of the Indian chief. Then he was conducted to the house of a half-breed whose hospitality he enjoyed during his sojourn. At this time, the village had four half-breed families, over fifty

²⁹ *The Salesianum*, XXIII, 24.

³⁰ *Berichte*, XX, 53 f.; *La Palestina* (1891), 81 f.

Christian Indians, and about two hundred pagan Indians. Father Skolla's visit synchronized with the celebration of the Great Medicine Feast. This made conversions among the heathens impossible for the time being. The principal chief of the village, in a speech, was exhorting the Indians to be faithful to their own gods. "Behold," he said, "this same veneration of the gods has continued among us down to the present. Wherefore, my sons! do not join yourselves to the belief of these living men, who are in the black robe, who preach about the cross, but faithfully cherish your household gods, just as your fathers have done, so that our tribe may not be ruined among other nations, lest it be completely destroyed or rooted out. Therefore, I enjoin my sons, my medicine men, that they be watchful lest any of ours join himself to the belief of the men in the black robe so that our name may endure."³¹ Father Skolla turned his attention to Father Baraga's converts and set a house in order as a chapel. He decorated it with pictures, crucifixes, and medals, and, after erecting a temporary altar for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, he went through the village ringing a bell to call the Christians together. After Mass, he instructed the Indians for the reception of Holy Communion and heard confessions. Services were held daily in this improvised chapel up to the time of his return to La Pointe, May 27, 1846.

The evening before his departure, he was invited to a hut where he found the pagan Indians assembled to meet him. The chief was spokesman for the group. He spoke of the Indians' respect for the missionary and assured him that all loved him. They had heard, he said, that Father Skolla wished to build a church and so had chosen a site for the erection of the same. They were heathen now and would not become Christian until after the erection of the church, when the chief and all his followers would embrace Christianity. An inter-

³¹ Translated from Latin as given in *La Palestina* (1891), 163.

preter translated the speech for Father Skolla, who had little knowledge of the Chippewa language because, from the time of his arrival at Detroit up to August, 1845, he had abandoned hope of becoming an Indian missionary. However, as soon as he was assigned to La Pointe, he began to study the language and had a slight acquaintance with it at the time of his visit to Fond du Lac. The Indians knew that the materials for the church building were in readiness, though the necessary funds for its completion were as yet lacking. A number of the young Indians and a few old squaws received Holy Communion, among whom there was a woman ninety years of age. Father Skolla left for La Pointe as soon as the labors of his missionary visit were completed.³²

Although Father Skolla was in charge of the Indian mission of St. Joseph at La Pointe with its mission stations, Baraga still retained the superintendence of the missions he had founded. Late in the fall of 1847, he made a journey to Fond du Lac. He deplored the fact that this mission was without a resident priest. He had importuned the Bishop of Detroit to station a missionary there and had also written to Europe in an effort to find one who would be willing to devote his life to the Christianizing of the Indians. Again he baptized a number of Indians. He heard that an Indian woman who had reached the age of four score and ten had been abandoned by her relatives who had taken up their winter quarters in the woods. The woman, who was ill, was happy to see Father Baraga. He instructed and baptized her. She died during the night. Father Baraga noted that, when aged parents or grandparents were deserted by the tribe on its departure to the woods, a Christian Indian family usually cared for the abandoned one. Father Baraga had thirteen first communicants during this visit. The journey back to La Pointe was most difficult, requiring seven instead of the usual four days. His companion suddenly became seriously ill. They were alone in the wilder-

³² *Berichte*, XX, 64-71; *La Palestina* (1891), 159-164, 234 f.

ness with few provisions. The companion recovered; but as he was too weak to carry his share of the baggage, Baraga burdened himself with all their effects. In this manner they continued their trail through the wilderness.³³

In June, 1850, Father Skolla went to Fond du Lac for a visit of three weeks. Again, Christian and heathen Indians received him with joy. Daily, he was visited by half-breeds and Indians, whether of the faith or not. The Christian Indians gave him the news of the mission. He learned of the number of deaths which had taken place since his last visit, of the number of Indians who were ill, of the spiritual condition of former converts, whether his people had remained faithful to the promises made in baptism, and of those who needed further instruction for Communion. They asked him for meditation books, hymn books, rosaries, crucifixes, and holy pictures. The heathen Indians told him about the hunger which they suffered, about fishing, about their annuity payments, about their chiefs, about their children, about their agreement with Indians living in the distant West, and about their disposition toward baptism. They asked him for tobacco. They inquired about Washington and the President of the United States.

The place was still without a church. As on his visit of 1846, Father Skolla built an altar in an old log house after he had covered the cracks in the walls and repaired the roof. The faithful hastened to help put the temporary chapel in order. They brought with them strips of woolen cloth and bright colored mats made of rushes. They covered the front, sides and back of the altar with the woolen cloth. The walls, blackened by smoke, were covered with the mats and broad strips of birch bark which had been sewed together. A bell of about three hundred pound weight was obtained from the warehouse. With the aid of a carpenter, this was put in place and a light rope fastened to it so that the faithful might be called to daily Mass

³³ *Berichte*, XXII, 79-83.

at its sound. Notwithstanding all the precautions taken to make the improvised chapel water-proof, the rain came in and ruined the altar decorations. The Christian Indians, happy at having a priest in their midst, came regularly each morning to the chapel. Morning prayer was said in common, followed by a hymn in the Chippewa language. During Mass the rosary was recited. After Mass, instructions were given to the children and adults in preparation for the sacraments. Father Skolla was consoled at the number of baptisms, confessions, and communions in the little chapel during the three weeks he spent in Fond du Lac, and rejoiced when the temperance pledge was subscribed to by fourteen new converts. Many at his La Pointe mission had already taken the pledge; and judging from its effect at La Pointe, there seemed every assurance that the temperance movement would improve the moral and economic welfare of the Indians.³⁴

Father Skolla paid his last visit to Fond du Lac in June, 1853. He left La Pointe on June 7, with John Bell, a Canadian, and his family. Heavy winds and rains were encountered on the trip, which required six days. Francis Roussain, a half-breed, was Father Skolla's host during his month's stay in Fond du Lac. Since his last visit, the diocese of St. Paul had been erected (1850), and the mission then came under the jurisdiction of Bishop Joseph Cretin, who gave Father Skolla the necessary faculties. Again, a chapel and altar had to be improvised, similar to that of 1850. Father Skolla spent his mornings as on the previous visit. In the afternoon, he gave instructions in preparation for Holy Communion. On Wednesday and Friday evenings, the Indians assembled for devotions, consisting of hymns, prayers and a sermon. The Christians came to the chapel every evening for prayers. Confessions were heard daily. There were many weekly communicants and eight first communicants, one of whom was almost ninety years of age. During the month over twenty Indians were baptized.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, XXIII, 101-108; *La Palestina* (1891), 235-237.

On Father Skolla's last Sunday at Fond du Lac ³⁵ he was joined by Father Francis Pierz, who had come from his mission at Crow Wing. The greater part of the night was spent by the missionaries in a discussion of their spiritual labors among the Chippewa. Father Skolla gave over the care of the mission and the instruction of Indians, eager for baptism, to Father Pierz,³⁶ who had been appointed missionary to the Chippewa Indians north of the Mississippi River, so that Fond du Lac fell within his territory. He realized that it was not an official duty which brought Father Skolla to the Indians at Fond du Lac, but true zeal for the salvation of souls and for the welfare of the Indians in particular, and appreciated his brother missionary the more.

Father Pierz planned a mission at Fond du Lac which would be cared for by a priest especially appointed for the place. This he hoped would result in the conversion and baptism of many of the Indians.³⁷ In 1854, he wrote to Bishop Cretin that many Indian chiefs had invited him to found missions among them; but that he could not see his way clear to do this, as he was finding it impossible to oversee his three missions, one of which was Fond du Lac.³⁸ Apparently Cretin could not meet his request. An application to the government for financial aid had not been granted. This seemed an injustice to him in view of the amount received by the Reverend Sherman Hall of Lake Superior, an agent of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.³⁹

³⁵ Father Skolla left Fond du Lac to return to La Pointe. Because of the removal of the Indians from La Pointe to Sandy Lake, Minnesota Territory, Father Skolla asked to be sent among the Menominee Indians as a missionary. He left La Pointe October 9, 1853, to take up his labors on the Oconto River.—*Ibid.* (1891), 268 f.

³⁶ *Berichte*, XXVI, 45-50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, XXVI, 59.

³⁸ Father Pierz's Baptismal Register records baptisms at Fond du Lac in 1853, but none after that date.—Baptismal Register of the mission of Crow Wing founded by Father Francis Pierz (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

³⁹ *Annalen der Verbreitung des Glaubens*, XXII, 177.

In 1855, with the permission of Bishop Cretin, Father Pierz gave over the care of the Fond du Lac mission to Bishop Baraga, who appointed Father Angelus Van Paemel, then stationed at Superior, Wisconsin, to care for the needs of the Catholics at Fond du Lac.⁴⁰ The records of St. Francis Church, Superior, Wisconsin,⁴¹ show that Father Van Paemel administered baptism at Fond du Lac several times each year from 1855 to 1860. It is interesting to note that confirmation was administered at Fond du Lac for the first time on August 15, 1858, when Bishop Baraga, accompanied by Father Van Paemel, confirmed forty of the Indians.⁴² Two years later, in December, 1860, Father John Cebul visited Fond du Lac and baptized eleven persons.⁴³ He may have made other visits, but, other than a record of the baptism of a Fond du Lac Indian in 1862, there is no available data as to their time or number. The other mission, or really two missions, Grand Portage and one on Pigeon River, five miles distant, were located in the extreme northwest part of modern Cook County, Minnesota.

The missionaries who accompanied Vérendrye on his journey of exploration and discovery to the West were the first to reach Grand Portage. They disembarked there after crossing Lake Superior and continued their journey westward. Father Charles Messaiger, the first among them, had been there in 1731 on his way to Fort St. Charles, Lake of the Woods, and again on his return in 1733. No record is available of missionary work carried on at this point in the eighteenth century. It would seem probable, since the missionaries accompanied the Vérendrye expeditions for the purpose of converting the natives of the region, that, if opportunity presented itself, they

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, XXIV, 84.

⁴¹ The titular of this church originally was the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

⁴² *Annalen*, XXVII, 390.

⁴³ Baptismal Register of Father John Cebul. Original in the Catholic Church Archives of Bayfield, Wisconsin.

would have availed themselves of the occasion to preach the Gospel to the Indians.

There is evidence that no mission was established at Grand Portage prior to 1838, although Father Baraga had visited the place in October, 1837, and baptized seven persons.⁴⁴ Prior to his visit, he had received a letter from the principal Indian chief inviting a missionary to instruct them. On his visit, he promised the Indians that he would try to arrange for a priest who would take up his permanent residence among them. The choice fell on Father Francis Pierz. In the summer of 1838, he spent a few days at La Pointe with Father Baraga, discussing the plans for the establishment of a mission at Grand Portage.⁴⁵ When Pierz arrived at Grand Portage on July 23, 1838, he found that the Indians in expectation had prepared a temporary chapel of bark for his use. And the Indians were on the shore of the lake ready to welcome him. Two years before the advent of Father Pierz, Pierre Cotté and his wife, who had so zealously labored at Fond du Lac for the conversion of the Chippewa, established themselves at Grand Portage as fur traders. With the coming of Cotté, the Indians began to assemble at Grand Portage as they had done earlier during the eighteenth and first years of the nineteenth centuries when there was also a fur trader stationed there. Mrs. Cotté took advantage of the opportunity which brought the Indians to her door and began to acquaint them with the truths of religion and a knowledge of God. A few days before the arrival of Father Pierz, a pagan Indian, whose sister had received instructions in the faith, became seriously ill. When all the pagan rites practised for the recovery of the sick were without avail, his sister prevailed upon him to ask the God of the Christians to restore him to health. The sick man recommended himself to God and promised to embrace Christianity should he be cured. His recovery awakened within the hearts

⁴⁴ Baptismal Register of Bishop Baraga; *Berichte*, XII, 71.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, XII, 71, 85; XIII, 42.

of the Indians respect for Christianity. This Indian, in order to be the first to greet Father Pierz on his arrival, waded out to meet the missionary's canoe. His baptism was the first Father Pierz performed at Grand Portage, and he became an exemplary Christian.

Pierz was led immediately upon his disembarkation to the small chapel of cedar bark and deerskin. On July 25, he dedicated the little chapel under the patronage of St. Peter. When he gave his first instruction, all present, with the exception of a murderer, were moved. During his stay at Grand Portage, the missionary preached twice daily, morning and evening. He conducted a school which was attended by those under fifty years of age. Four times daily, his group of pupils changed to give place to another group. The Indians were taught reading, writing, praying, and singing in their native language. Father Baraga's prayer book was in constant use. So talented and so eager for instruction were the pupils that at the end of two months a third of them were able to read, pray, and sing from Baraga's manual. No one was baptized until he had a good knowledge of the Catholic faith and an appreciation of it. Sunday afternoon was the time set for baptisms. Father Pierz describes the manner in which the chief and his bride appeared for the ceremonies of baptism and marriage. "He presented himself for these holy acts in a white and yellow dotted coat, his loins girded with a beautiful red sash, in red trousers embroidered in white, and in yellow shoes. . . . His seventy year old bride appeared in a black dress, red gaiters and yellow shoes, embroidered in white from head to foot, and completely covered with gay-colored glass beads. . . . He received the grace of baptism in a very edifying manner with much humility and remorse for his past sins, for he had with his own hands, in revengeful retaliation, split open the head of a man because he had, as they say, killed twenty-two other persons and eaten them in the woods." ⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Translated from German as given in *Berichte*, XIII, 49.

About the middle of September, Father Pierz visited Father Baraga at La Pointe for a few days, after which he returned to Grand Portage.⁴⁷ From Grand Portage, in 1838, Father Pierz sent to the Leopoldine Society a list of what he considered the necessary qualifications for a missionary among the Indians, and also an account of his own method of converting the Indians.⁴⁸ His qualifications were five in number: The missionary must be a thorough, well read theologian able to care for his flock and also able to meet the attacks made on the faith by those outside the fold and answer them with a clear exposition of the dogmas of the Church; he must not be a novice in the care of souls, but must be a practical, experienced priest ready to give instructions at a minute's notice, because a missionary often had to preach from three to five times a day, in several languages, without time to prepare the sermon; he must know the English language, which is the language of the country, and the French, which was spoken by the Jesuit Fathers and which came to be looked upon by the Indians as the characteristic language of those who preach the true faith; he must be strong physically in order to undergo the hardships connected with the missionary life and not succumb under the long mission journeys and inclement weather; and must bring with him all requisites for the holding of divine service and also either a liberal supply of money, or have made arrangements to receive help from Europe, for the missionary must bear the expense of the interpreter's salary, costly mission journeys, and his own support, which he would find ten times more expensive on the Indian missions than in Europe.

As to his method of procedure in the matter of converting the Indians, Father Pierz sent, if possible, a well-instructed Indian to ascertain the attitude of the chief of the tribe about to be visited toward the missionary and religion and to prepare the Indians for his reception. On his arrival, Father

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, XII, 72.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, XIII, 53-56.

Pierz went immediately to pay his respects to the chief, who assembled the men of his tribe in his own hut or that of the missionary or even under the open sky, where the Indians in a circle on the ground sat around the priest to hear the word of God. The Indian women and children never attended the first assembly, because it was their custom to pledge themselves to follow the warriors in the acceptance or rejection of the missionary's religion. In Father Pierz's first instruction to the Indians, he always explained the necessity and consolations of religion, and, in a gentle tone, gave a short explanation of the Catholic religion. After this, he asked the Indians to consider among themselves the advisability of adopting the Catholic religion. Before leaving them to their deliberations, he shook hands with each of the Indians assembled. After his departure, the chief filled his pipe with tobacco and gave some to each of his followers. Each filled his pipe and smoked in silence, pondering on the words of the missionary. After a pause, the chief stated the opinion he had arrived at and asked for the consent of the others to it, or he asked each individually for his personal opinion and then cast his vote with the majority. It was only after the decision of the council was determined that Father Pierz could begin the systematic instruction of the Indians who wished to become Christians, in order to prepare them for baptism. Father Pierz found it no easy task to draw barbarians and pagans, who had grown old in their superstitions and false prejudices or had been scandalized by poor Christians or had been corrupted by evil white men, to Christianity and the formation of pious souls.

Father Pierz in an account of his method of converting the red men set forth his schedule as follows:

Every morning after sunrise, the signal for morning prayer is given with a large sea shell or a small bell. All prayers and daily devotions open and close with a beautiful hymn of which the Indians are extraordinarily fond. After morning prayer, I read Holy Mass while the choir with beautiful hymns raise the heart to God, or the leader reads from

the book to his people during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, alternating the reading with the recital of the rosary. After Mass, I read a selection from the Gospel in the Indian language and explain by means of an interpretation in the manner of a homily. After breakfast until time for the evening repast, I usually maintain a school for old and young, and teach them the necessary prayers and hymns. After sunset, the signal is given for night prayer, which opens and closes again with a hymn. After this, I read a few words from the catechism and explain it as comprehensively as possible. At the close, I tell them a story of one of the saints from the *Legends*.

On Saturday afternoon and also on Sunday morning until ten o'clock, the hour for Mass, I usually hear confessions. Every Sunday and holyday, High Mass, with a sermon, is celebrated with solemnity, the priest having previously sprinkled the people with holy water during the singing of the *Asperges me, Domine*, which psalm is taken up and continued by the choir in the Indian language. During the High Mass, all those versed in and capable of reading, sing from the book and respond in Latin. After the Communion of the priest, the communicants approach the altar to receive Holy Communion, while the choir intones a devotional hymn in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, and the leader prays aloud the prayers in preparation for Communion and in thanksgiving after Communion. Those who are to receive Holy Communion for the first time always approach the altar with a lighted candle in the hand and dressed neatly. Holy Communion is never distributed to the Indians, with the exception of the sick, except at the Communion of the Mass. Sunday afternoon at two o'clock, Vespers are sung, with five psalms in the Indian language and the Sunday oration in the Latin, and are completed with the *Benedicamus Domino*. Christian doctrine follows this. After all this has taken place, the sacrament of baptism is solemnly conferred on the catechumens, if they are sufficiently prepared. I always open such solemnities with a short instruction from the rich material-content of the function, and the choir intones a soul-elevating hymn in which the convert takes leave of heathenism and abjures all pagan vices in order to serve God his Creator. The close includes again an address to the newly baptized or to the heathens present, with a prayer of thanks to God for the graces of the day.⁴⁹

Father Pierz reported that seventy-five pupils were enrolled

⁴⁹ Translated from the German as given in *Berichte*, XIII, 56-58.

in his school on August 1, 1838: forty-four children, of whom thirty-nine were Indians and five French; thirty-one adults, of whom nineteen were Indians and twelve French.⁵⁰ With conditions most favorable in Grand Portage, Father Pierz hoped that it would become a mission center with outlying stations under its care. He planned to replace the bark chapel with a frame church as soon as funds should warrant it.⁵¹ His Baptismal Register shows a record of sixty-four persons baptized at Grand Portage between July 29, 1838 and May 11, 1839. It also records baptisms at Fort William, which he visited twice during his first mission year at Grand Portage.⁵² It was a great disappointment when, on a visit to Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac, Father Pierz received word to abandon for a time the newly established mission and proceed again to Arbre Croche for work among the Ottawas.⁵³ In his brief residence among the Chippewa Indians, he found them superior to the Ottawas in talent, ability to learn, and zeal in their praise of God; hence he preferred to work among them.⁵⁴ Sub-agent Daniel P. Bushnell of La Pointe wrote to Governor Henry Dodge of Wisconsin that the Indians at Grand Portage had "made good improvement during his⁵⁵ residence among them, and that they are very desirous for his return. It is respectfully recommended that such aid as is given to schools under similar circumstances by the Department, be extended to the one at Grand Portage."⁵⁶ After a delay of three years, the new sub-agent at La Pointe, Alfred Brunson, reported the

⁵⁰ 26 Cong. 1 Sess., *House Ex. Doc.*, 2, 521.

⁵¹ *Berichte*, XIII, 50.

⁵² Baptismal Register of Father Francis Pierz, 1838-1839 (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵³ Letter of Father Pierz to Daniel Bushnell, Arbre Croche, April 24, 1840, Indian Office Files, La Pointe, B 1017.

⁵⁴ *Berichte*, XIII, 59 f.

⁵⁵ Father Pierz.

⁵⁶ Letter of Sub-agent Bushnell to Governor Dodge, September 30, 1840, Indian Office Files, La Pointe, W 1296.

missions at Grand Portage and Pigeon River as being outside the district entitled to payment for school purposes.⁵⁷

A year after Father Pierz left Grand Portage, three cases of church goods were shipped from Trieste, in care of Ramsay Crooks, President of the American Fur Company, for the Grand Portage mission. Since the mission at Grand Portage was closed, the goods, which included decorative bronze vases for churches, a chalice and a paten of silver, and seven statues,⁵⁸ were on arrival in New York forwarded to the company's agent at Mackinac for Father Pierz at Arbre Croche.⁵⁹

In the spring of 1842, Father Pierz again returned to Grand Portage, but instead of disembarking at Grand Portage, the site of his former mission, he continued on to Pigeon River. The Christian and heathen Indians, who had assembled on the shore at Grand Portage to welcome him, followed in canoes. At Pigeon River, Pierz chose an appropriate place for the erection of a temporary chapel of birch lined with cedar mats. When the chapel was completed, he gave attention to instructing the Indians in agricultural pursuits. To give the Indians time to cultivate the fields during the day, he bought a fish net at a cost of seventy dollars. It was found that two netsful of fish taken in each evening were sufficient to feed his entire congregation. Thus there was no call for the Indians to fish during the day.⁶⁰

Under Father Pierz's direction trees were felled, and, with the assistance of carpenters, work was begun on the erection of a large church. Money for the undertaking was received from Canon Salzbacher through Ramsay Crooks. The church was

⁵⁷ Annual Report of Sub-agent Alfred Brunson, La Pointe Indian Agency, September 30, 1843. Indian Office Files, La Pointe, B 1908.

⁵⁸ Letter of J. P. Suppantschitsch to Ramsay Crooks, Trieste, April 30, 1840, Am. Fur Co. Papers, 8368. Original in New York Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵⁹ Letter of Ramsay Crooks to J. P. Suppantschitsch, New York, September 8, 1840, Am. Fur Co. Letter Book, 14, 72, Am. Fur Co. Papers, 9368. Original in N. Y. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁶⁰ *Katholische Blätter aus Tirol*, No. 32, 506; *Sion*, XII, 1072.

never entirely completed during Father Pierz's sojourn at Pigeon River.⁶¹ To ensure permanency to the assembling of the Indians in the village, two cows, four swine, and a dozen hens were brought to the new mission. Small trees were transplanted from Father Pierz's tree-nursery at Sault Ste. Marie. Seed grain was also brought from the Sault. As much as Father Pierz occupied himself with the economic development of the mission, it was secondary interest to him. He continued to follow the schedule he had mapped out for himself as a missionary as well as he could. His first duty to the Indians was caring for their spiritual needs.⁶² He with the aid of David Mackinbines, a teaching assistant, established a school upon his arrival. The attendance was good—forty-five names on the register on August 31, 1842. In a report made at the end of August, 1842, Father Pierz jotted down under the heading *Remarks*: "This school was established last spring by me. In this school children are not only taught the knowledge of religion but also such things as are conducive for the ordinary lives of both sexes. It is hoped that the school will be kept up and promote the education and civilization of the Indians, that it may also prove itself worthy of the kind attention and fostering aid of the Government." He gave as the place of location of the mission, a site on Pigeon River about one mile from the lake and four from Grand Portage.⁶³ The mission at Pigeon River was soon without a missionary. For the second time, the Ottawa at Arbre Croche insisted upon Father Pierz returning to them. Bishop Lefevre of Detroit asked him to take up his duties again among the Ottawa since no other missionary would satisfy them. With real regret, Father Pierz left his "beloved" Chippewa on October 15,

⁶¹ *Berichte*, XVII, 56 f.

⁶² *Katholische Blätter aus Tirol*, No. 32, 506; *Sion*, XII, 1072.

⁶³ Annual Report showing the state of the school at Pigeon River, Lake Superior, under the Superintending of Francis Pierz, August 31, 1842, Indian Office Files, Sault Ste. Marie, "O."

1842. He had made two attempts to establish a permanent mission among them and on each occasion had met with disappointment.⁶⁴

When Bishop John Martin Henni visited La Pointe in August 1844, several Indians from Grand Portage came to him with a petition asking for a permanent missionary, as they had no one to baptize their children or the catechumens. Occasionally they saw a priest as he passed their way going east or west, but there was no missionary to administer the sacraments and bury their dead. In his shortage of suitable men, Bishop Henni was unable to assign them a priest.⁶⁵

In the month of July, 1846, Father Otto Skolla made a journey from La Pointe to Grand Portage. Six miles from Grand Portage, he met two boats of Indians on their way to Fond du Lac. They gave up their proposed journey and accompanied Father Skolla on his way. As soon as the missionary stepped from the boat, the Indians hastened to him, greeted him, and knelt for his blessing. They led him to a chapel, twelve by sixty feet in size, built of branches and bark, which they had erected in anticipation of his coming. This served also as Father Skolla's abode while in Grand Portage. The Indians gathered the wild flowers of the woods and the fields to decorate the improvised altar made by the missionary. He held services and gave instructions during his stay, and also baptized a few children. Over twenty Indians received Communion. Father Skolla learned that the Indians were accustomed to assemble twice a day on Sundays and holydays, when there was no priest in their midst, for prayer and the singing of hymns. There were about eighty adult Indians at Grand Portage at this time, who lived in small huts and subsisted on fish, potatoes, rice, and hares, the only wild game in the neighborhood. Pigeon River also received a visit, as Father Skolla speaks of this mission as some six miles from Grand Portage.

⁶⁴ *Katholische Blätter aus Tirol*, No. 32, 506; *Sion*, XII, 1072.

⁶⁵ *The Salesianum*, XXIII, 22 ff.

Father Pierz considered it four. The church begun by Pierz was still without a roof. Father Skolla promised the Indians its completion the following spring. Near the church was a small one-room house and another building used as a store-house for church supplies and tools. Father Skolla returned to La Pointe from his mission journey on July 24, 1846.⁶⁶

Father Pierz had an opportunity in the summer of 1847 to visit again the missions he had founded in 1838 and 1842. The work begun by him was still bearing fruit. The Christian Indians at Grand Portage were well dressed and living in huts or the customary lodges. They were keeping up the practice of their religion as well as they could under the circumstances. At Pigeon River, the Indians were engaged industriously in agriculture. The ground around the church and mission house had been planted with potatoes. Father Pierz marvelled at their industry. They had, however, neglected through ignorance the live stock with which Father Pierz had supplied the mission. The cattle and swine had perished on the ice. During the winter, the Indians lived on game; during the summer, on vegetables raised in their gardens. There were a number of newly arrived families whom Pierz instructed and baptized. On August 16, Father Pierz bade them farewell for the last time. Some fifty of the Indians, in birch canoes, accompanied him for seven days on his journey to La Pointe, where he was going to visit Father Skolla. He found the Indians gathered at La Pointe waiting for the annuity payment according to treaty agreements. As many came from the upper Mississippi, Pierz availed himself of the opportunity to preach the Gospel to them. Apparently pleased, they invited him to accompany them home, and a chief gave a pressing invitation to visit his village where many Indians had never seen a priest. The only answer that could be given was that perhaps it might come to pass.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Berichte*, XX, 71-74.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, XXII, 96-100.

At La Pointe, Father Pierz met Father Pierre Choné, S. J., of the station on Grand Manitoulin Isle, who promised to care for the missions at Grand Portage and Pigeon River. He would on his visit either make the mission at Pigeon River a center with a resident priest or he would establish a mission near by on the Canadian side of the river.⁶⁸ In the month of August, 1847, Father Choné went to look over the sites where a mission might be established. Pigeon River was chosen, but the work of reopening the mission was not to begin until the summer of 1848.⁶⁹ It was on July 15, 1848, that the little group of three missionaries, Father Nicolas Frémiot, S. J., Father Pierre Choné, S. J., and Brother de Pooter, S. J., set out from Sault Ste. Marie to reopen the mission of Pigeon River. Father Frémiot as chronicler described their arrival: "Towards noon ⁷⁰ we enter this other Jordan which waters our promised land. But, here there are no Jebusites to wage war against; no one to dispute our peaceable possession of it. We step ashore and what do we see? Here and there some unfinished houses, in some places the poles of a deserted lodge still standing, then upon a prominence near the bank of the river, a log church which formerly lacked only the roof but which now is falling into ruin bit by bit, a little farther on a house or, if one prefers, a cabin with a single room, through chinks in whose roof one may see the sky. This is the house which is destined for us. A missionary, Father Pierz, built it and also the church. That was five years ago; then frightened with the difficulties ⁷¹ which the mission then offered, he abandoned it to go to Sault Ste. Marie: he is today in Arbre Croche, an Ottawa mission on Lake Michigan. In this house

⁶⁸ *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XI, 136.

⁶⁹ Letter of Father Choné to a member of the Society of Jesus, Ste. Croix, Grand Manitoulin, February 24, 1848, *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada*, No. 45 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷⁰ July 24, 1848.

⁷¹ This statement is an injustice to Father Pierz. Vide *supra*, 67.

we found two chairs and a table: behold the kindly Providence.”⁷²

There were no Indians at Pigeon River to greet the missionaries. Father Choné, Brother de Pooter, and the rowers, after a simple repast, left to go to Princess Bay. Father Frémiot remained alone until a little before noon on the following day. Then seven Indians appeared, some of whom were Christians and knelt for the missionary's blessing; and others were heathens. Father Frémiot entertained and fed them as well as he could. After a few days, the Indians commenced to come to Pigeon River to take up their abode there again. Two of the Indians undertook the building of a house for the missionaries. Father Frémiot spent the time before the departure of Father Choné for La Pointe in the study of Father George Belcourt's grammar of the Chippewa language. It was his only opportunity to use the book as Father Choné carried it with him to give to Father Baraga.⁷³ The mission was placed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception. In the midst of building operations, Brother de Pooter, who was directing the work, accidentally cut his knee to the bone by the

⁷² “Vers midi nous entrons dans cet autre Jourdain qui arrose notre terre promise. Mais ici pas de Jésusen à combattre, personne pour nous en disputer la paisible possession. En effet nous mettons pied-à-terre, et que voyons-nous? Cà et là quelques maisons inachevées, ailleurs les perches encore debout d'une loge devenue déserte; puis, sur un plateau central, au bord de la rivière, une église en bois à laquelle il ne manquait jadis que la couverture, mais qui maintenant tombe pièce-a-pièce; un peu plus loin une maison, ou, si vous aimez mieux une cabane qui se compose d'un seul appartement et qui laisse voir le ciel à travers les fentes de la toiture. C'est la maison qui nous est destinée. Un missionnaire, M. Pirse (*sic*), la fit bâtir ainsi que l'Eglise, il y a cinq ans; puis effrayé des difficultés qu'offrait alors la mission, il l'abandonna pour aller au Sault Ste. Marie: il est aujourd'hui à l'arbre-croche, mission d'Ottawas sur le lac Michigan. Dans cette maison nous trouvons deux chaises et une table: Voyez quelle aimable Providence.”—Letter of Father Frémiot to a Jesuit Father, Rivière aux Tourtres, July 24, 1849, *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada*, No. 48 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷³ *Ibid.* Father Belcourt was stationed at Pembina.

clumsy use of the hatchet. The Indians staunched the blood with tobacco. Then the one-room cabin, which had been serving as a chapel, a storeroom, a living room, a kitchen, and a refectory, had to serve as an infirmary also. Father Frémont tried to direct the work on the house. An old Indian woman gave some assistance in housekeeping.⁷⁴ The new house was completed and blessed on November 26, 1848, first as a house and then as a chapel. At the further end, an altar with a tabernacle and six candle sticks turned in wood was set up. A curtain separated the sanctuary from the rest of the apartment. Here the savages assembled twice daily; here twelve little Indian boys and ten little Indian girls learned their letters in the school conducted by Father Frémont.⁷⁵ As the house could never be warmed, Father Frémont often had the experience of having the ink he was using freeze in the bottle so that it was necessary to thaw it out a couple of times during the course of a morning. He even froze his fingers saying the Divine Office near the fire.⁷⁶

At some time during the summer of 1849, after the feast of Corpus Christi which Father Frémont prepared to celebrate, but was prevented from celebrating because of a heavy rain,⁷⁷ the mission was moved from Pigeon River to Fort William.⁷⁸ The house which was erected at Pigeon River was burned to

⁷⁴ Letter of Father Frémont to the Provincial of the Society of Jesus, Mission of the Immaculate Conception, August 11, 1848, *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada*, No. 51 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷⁵ Letter of Father Frémont to a member of the Society of Jesus, Pigeon River, December 8, 1848, *ibid.*, No. 56 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷⁶ Letter of Father Frémont to the Father Provincial, Fort William, January, 1850, *Ibid.*, No. 64 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷⁷ Letter of Father Frémont to a member of the Society of Jesus, Pigeon River, June 28, 1849, *Ibid.*, No. 59 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁷⁸ Letter of Father Frémont to Father Micard, Sault Ste. Marie, February 2, 1851, *Ibid.*, No. 75 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

the ground shortly after it was completed in the winter of 1848-1849. It was a great loss to the missionaries.⁷⁹ From 1849 to 1864 and after, the Indians at Pigeon River and Grand Portage were visited from Fort William. It was customary for the Fathers to make their visits between the months of October and May.⁸⁰

In 1855, Bishop Baraga sent Eugene Benoit to open a school at Grand Portage.⁸¹ On July 10 of the following year, Bishop Baraga spent a day at Grand Portage, when on his way to Fort William for confirmation services. On the fifteenth of the same month, he was again at Grand Portage, this time accompanied by Father Dominic Duranquet, S. J., from Fort William. Fifty-three persons were confirmed by him at Grand Portage on July 20. The next day, he was on his way to Superior, Wisconsin.⁸² Timothy Hegney succeeded Eugene Benoit as conductor of the school at Grand Portage, where a schoolhouse had been built by the government.⁸³

The three missions established on Lake Superior in 1835, 1838, and 1842 had not become mission centers with a resident missionary in charge before 1864. They continued to be cared for as they had been, except for short intervals, from other mission centers.

⁷⁹ Letter of Father Frémot to a member of the Society of Jesus, Fort William, December 3, 1851, *Ibid.*, No. 81 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal.

⁸⁰ Letter of Father Frémot to Father Micard, Sault Ste. Marie, February 2, 1851, *Ibid.*, No. 75 (apograph), Archives, St. Mary's College, Montreal; *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* (London), XIII, 152; *Annalen*, XXII, 175, 490; *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XXV, 593; XXVIII, 207 f.

⁸¹ *Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1855*, Mission report of Bishop Baraga, Sault Ste. Marie, September 27, 1855.

⁸² Diary of Bishop Baraga, Vol. I. (transcript of excerpts), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib., original in Archives, St. Ignatius Church, Houghton, Michigan; *Berichte*, XXVIII, 33 f.

⁸³ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1857*, 25-26; *Ibid.*, (1858), 48.

CHAPTER IV

MISSIONARIES AMONG THE SIOUX AND WINNEBAGO INDIANS

Missionary labors among the Sioux in the nineteenth century began with the episcopal visit of Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque to the northern part of his diocese.¹ He left Dubuque on June 23, 1839, in company with Father Anthony Pelamourgues and an interpreter. A journey of some days' duration "on board a large and magnificent steam vessel" brought them to the conflux of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, a site then known as St. Peter's (now Mendota). There they found one hundred and eighty-five Catholics, most of whom spoke French or Sioux. Few were able to understand English. During the thirteen days spent in the northern part of his diocese, the bishop and his companion baptized fifty-six persons, gave the nuptial blessing to four couples, had thirty-three communicants and confirmed eight persons. Bishop Loras purchased a canoe in order that he might visit the Indian villages along the Mississippi. He had received an invitation to visit Little Crow's village, Kaposia, from the chief himself with whom he became acquainted at St. Peter's. It was at this village that Bishop Loras made his first visit on his return trip. Little Crow assembled about eighty warriors in his hut to meet the bishop. They entreated him to send a missionary who would not be burdened with the care of a wife and family. A priest was promised to them as soon as he should have a sufficient knowledge of their language for effective work. After the customary exchange of gifts and a pipe of peace to show mutual good will,

¹ The material for the account of this visit has been taken from *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, II, 403, III, 43; *The Catholic Advocate*, IV, 164, 228; *The Catholic Herald*, VII, 307 f.; *Annals* (Dublin), III, 339-345; *Memoirs of Father Mazzuchelli*, 243.

the party continued to Dubuque. Bishop Loras had an opportunity to understand the hostility between the Chippewa and Sioux. War had broken out between the two tribes, which had resulted in the killing of about one hundred and twenty-four Chippewa and some nineteen Sioux braves. However, this event strengthened the bishop's desire to do all in his power toward the conversion and civilization of these Indians.

Shortly after his consecration in 1837, Bishop Loras had gone to France to enlist volunteers among the priests and seminarians for his diocese. On his return, he brought back Fathers Joseph Cretin and Anthony Pelamourgues, and four subdeacons. Of the deacons, Lucien Galtier and Augustin Ravoux were ordained to the priesthood in Dubuque, January 5, 1840.² Ravoux was then stationed at Prairie du Chien until September, 1841. Bishop Loras asked him to visit the Sioux in the northern part of the diocese with a view of studying the prospects for the establishment of a mission among them and also to select a mission site if conditions were favorable.³ Ravoux hastened to take up his work among the Indians. He came to Fort Snelling where his confrère, Father Galtier, had been located since the spring of 1840, caring for the Catholics there and in the surrounding country. After a short visit, he left for Traverse des Sioux. Less than six months before, Reverend Samuel W. Pond, a Congregational minister, had met the Indian chief from Traverse des Sioux. He wrote of the meeting: "Yesterday we conversed with the chief of the Indians who reside in that neighborhood on the subject of commencing a Mission among them. He says he does not want missionaries and if he did he should prefer a Catholic. They are we suppose very much under the influence of a Catholic trader residing

² Ravoux, *Reminiscences, Memoirs and Lectures*, 1 f.

³ *Ibid.*, 2; Letter of Father Ravoux to H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, December 15, 1866, Sibley Papers; Letter of Thomas S. Williamson to David Greene, Lac qui Parle, February 8, 1842, Am. Bd. Com. For. Missions, MSS., 141:20 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

among them.”⁴ The trader mentioned was Louis Provencal known also as Louis le Blanc. Father Ravoux was his guest while at Traverse des Sioux, which was situated a short distance from the present site of St. Peter, Minnesota. During the two months spent there, the missionary applied himself to the study of the Sioux language. Meanwhile, he gave instructions to the Indians through an interpreter. He baptized ten of the Indians, five of them on Christmas day. On December 26, 1841, he left Traverse des Sioux to go to Little Rock at the mouth of Cottonwood River near Fort Ridgely. His time, during the month spent here, was employed in a manner similar to that at Traverse des Sioux.⁵ From Little Rock, Father Ravoux went to Lac qui Parle,⁶ where two or three months

⁴ Letter of S. W. Pond to David Greene, St. Peter's, May 8, 1841, Am. Bd. Com. For. Missions, MSS., 141:95 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵ Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 2; *Labors of Mgr. A. Ravoux among the Sioux or Dakota Indians from the Fall of the Year 1841 to the Spring of 1844*, 1 f.

⁶ Judging from comments found in letters written by missionaries sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, some concern must have been entertained in regard to the effect of the advent of a Catholic missionary in the vicinity of one of their stations. Rev. S. R. Riggs wrote to David Greene from his Lac qui Parle mission, March 26, 1839 (Am. Bd. Com. For. Missions, MSS., 141:49—transcript—Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.): “. . . I have alluded to the diminution in our Sabbath assemblies. For several weeks past Mr. Renville and family have absented themselves from public worship at the mission and by their example have led others also to stay away. . . . I suppose, Mr. R. expects a Romish priest here this summer and in such an event, he has said, he will treat him as he has done us. . . . Should Mr. Renville leave the mission church he will doubtless take many of the members with him as the most of them are his relatives and under his immediate influence.” On August 3, 1842, Rev. Thomas Williamson wrote to Samuel Pond from Camp Coldwater (Pond MSS.—photostat—Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.): “Ravioux (*sic*) tells me he is going with F. Frenier to Lac Travers, and feels very desirous of having one or two teachers in that neighborhood and if there is any chance of getting such teachers as you can have confidence in rather than fail of doing so I would think it good plicy (*sic*) to give double what we formerly have. As it is manifest that the Romanists are determined to meet and oppose us at every point it is a matter of vast importance to have as many as possible of the people taught to read the word of God that we may be able to fight them with The Sword of the Spirit. . . . Be particu-

were spent. Early in the spring, he returned to Mendota to spend the summer in further preparation for his work among the Sioux. With the aid of an interpreter, he commenced the compilation of a book in the Sioux language. He also taught the catechism in the Sioux to members of the Freniere families from Lake Traverse who were encamped near the church at Mendota. It was during the summer that the Chippewa Indians attacked the Sioux at Little Crow's village. When news of the conflict reached Father Ravoux, he left Mendota for the scene of the massacre, hoping that he might be able to baptize some of the dying Sioux. Travelling on foot, he took the wrong road and it was night before he reached his destination. He crossed the river to get an interpreter, returned, and spent the night among the wounded and dying. He visited the village several times during the summer; in September, he accompanied the Frenieres to Lake Traverse, where they reported that there were many Sioux Indians encamped. Much to his disappointment, he found that the Indians, with the exception of four or five families, had left for the winter hunt. During a sojourn of two weeks, he baptized ten persons, of whom six were young children.⁷

At the urgent request of the members of the Faribault⁸

lar in cautioning any whom you may employ and all our members who may go there to keep aloof from the priest having nothing to do with him and I think it would be right to tell them that if they teach Freniers children they should look to Frenier for pay for it. . . . I hope you will use your own discretion and do just as you think best hoping and praying that the present dispersion of the church at Lac qui Parle may tend to the furtherance of the Gospel."

⁷ Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 3, 5-8, 10; *Labors of Mgr. A. Ravoux among the Sioux*, 2.

⁸ Jean Baptiste Faribault, a Canadian by birth, entered the service of the Northwest Company in 1798, at the age of twenty-four. A year later he was assigned to the post at Redwood on the Des Moines River. In 1803, he was placed in charge of the post at the Little Rapids of the Minnesota River. After ten years spent with the Northwest Company, this Indian trader began business on his own account at Prairie du Chien. In 1820, he moved his trading station to Pike's Island, which was granted to Fari-

family, Father Ravoux, after his return from Lake Traverse, went to their trading post near Little Prairie (now Chaska, Minnesota). The Sioux from Shakopee's village and from Carver frequented the post. The Indians of Shakopee's village were absent during the months of November and December, but, because of the heavy snows of that winter, they returned from the hunt before the first of January and took up their camp across the river from Faribault's trading post, where Father Ravoux met and conversed daily with some of them.

The Faribaults, as Ravoux's hosts, acted as interpreters; for they spoke French, English, and Sioux. With their aid, Ravoux continued his book in the Sioux language. In April, 1843, Father Ravoux went to Dubuque to see Bishop Loras, as he was anxious to get financial aid in building a house or chapel at Little Prairie and also to get his book in print. The bishop gave him three hundred dollars for mission buildings, and Ravoux left Dubuque for Prairie du Chien. Here he made use of Father Joseph Cretin's printing press, and with *Wakantanka Ti ki Chanku* (*The Path to the House of God*) in print, Father Ravoux returned to Little Prairie with a carpenter. A house or chapel fifteen by thirty feet, at a cost of two hundred and fifty dollars, was built on a site near the banks of the Minnesota River and placed under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier. Ravoux was quite satisfied that it presented a neat appearance with its shingled roof.⁹

In August, 1843, Bishop Loras sent Father Anthony Godfert, who had been ordained in Dubuque the previous year, to Father Ravoux as assistant. On his arrival at Mendota, Father Galtier

bault's wife, Pelagie Faribault, a half-breed, in the treaty negotiated by Colonel Leavenworth with the Sioux in 1820. Six years later, he moved to Mendota. He retained a trading post at the Little Rapids of the Minnesota River, where his two sons, Oliver and David, and their families lived.

⁹ *Labors of Mgr. A. Ravoux among the Sioux*, 2-7; Report of A. Ravoux to Bishop Loras, Fort Snelling, January 9, 1844, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque; Letter of A. Ravoux to Bishop Loras, Little Prairie, March 4, 1844, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque.

accompanied Father Godfert to his mission at Little Prairie. He found the mission a difficult one and the missionary's house a poor shelter from the winds. Feeling that if the missionaries were provided with a servant who would look after the material side of the mission, both he and Ravoux would have better opportunity to care for the spiritual needs of the Indians, he requested Bishop Loras to provide him with money for a servant and a horse. Many other Indians could be visited, and while some of the Indians were receptive, not any of them were over eager for the Gospel. On September 17, 1843, seventeen of the Indians gathered around the two missionaries and sang the hymns which Father Ravoux had taught them. The latter had opened a little school for the Indian children in order to teach them to read so that they might be able to use the religious book which he had prepared for them. He gave instructions from the catechism and prepared them for baptism.¹⁰ Twenty-three Indians and half-breeds were baptized by Fathers Ravoux and Godfert in the first three months of 1844,¹¹ after which the mission was closed for lack of resources. Father Galtier, who had been stationed at Mendota, was recalled by Bishop Loras, who sent Father Ravoux in his place. Father Godfert returned to take up parish work in the southern part of the diocese. Ravoux visited Little Prairie occasionally up to 1846, when the chapel was dismantled and the lumber taken down the river to Wabasha.¹²

¹⁰ Letter of Father Godfert to Bishop Loras, Little Prairie, September 30, 1843 (Hickey transcript), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris; Letter of A. Ravoux to Bishop Loras, Little Prairie, January 31, 1844, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque; Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 3 f.; *Memoirs of Father Mazzuchelli*, 297; *Annals* (Dublin), VII, 389.

¹¹ Baptismal Register of Father Ravoux among the Sioux Indians (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 3.

¹² *Labors of Mgr. A. Ravoux*, 8; Report of Bishop Loras to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, December 4, 1844 (Hickey transcripts), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris; Letters of A. Ravoux to Bishop Loras, St. Peter, May 28, 1844; January

With the closing of the mission at Little Prairie, the history of the effort to establish a permanent mission among the Sioux of the Mississippi within the area of Minnesota ends. Father Ravoux, however, never lost interest in the Indians. On March 14, 1848, he wrote Bishop Loras that he would lose the use of his tongue before he would cease denouncing the sale of liquor to the Indians and that the laws prohibiting its sale to Indians were not enforced.¹³ Two years later when trouble broke out between the Indians and settlers at Sauk Rapids, and the Winnebago were threatening travellers along the upper Mississippi, Father Ravoux informed Henry H. Sibley, Delegate from Minnesota Territory, that liquor was still the cause of evil among the Indians and that because of it there was trouble at Sauk Rapids and among the Winnebago.¹⁴

In 1860, the Benedictine Fathers, who had opened a house in the diocese in 1856, considered the establishing of a mission among the Sioux on the Cottonwood River.¹⁵ Before the plans were perfected, however, the Sioux rose in rebellion against the white traders and settlers on and near the lower Sioux agency on August 18, 1862. From the lower agency, the massacre spread to the upper agency, and the Sioux War of 1862 was in full swing. Governor Ramsey commissioned Henry H. Sibley colonel and commander of the expedition against the Indians. It was not until after the first of October that the Indians' power was broken. They then began to surrender to General Sibley, who promised protection to all who had taken no part in the outbreak. The others as they were taken captive were brought before the commission and

1, 1845; April 23, 1845, and Report of A. Ravoux to Bishop Loras, St. Peter, 1846, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque; *Catholic Almanac* (1845), 118. Letters of Father Godfert to Bishop Loras, Little Prairie, March 26, 1844; Dubuque, October 23, 1844, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque.

¹³ *United States Catholic Magazine*, VII, 326.

¹⁴ Letter of Father Ravoux to Henry H. Sibley, St. Peter, July 3, 1850, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib. ¹⁵ *Berichte*, XXXI, 41.

tried. The guilty Indians were taken to South Bend near Mankato; the uncondemned to Fort Snelling. Father Ravoux went to Mankato to visit the Sioux captives, three hundred and sixty in number. Of this number sixteen had been acquitted and were to be given safe conduct to Fort Snelling. On the morning of December 20, Father Ravoux went to the jail to see the prisoners who were waiting for their sentence. This was read in the presence of Fathers Ravoux and Sommereisen and Reverends Thomas Williamson and Samuel Riggs. Thirty-eight were given the death penalty. At the close of the reading of the sentence, Colonel Miller advised the Indians to make choice of a spiritual director to prepare them for death. Twenty-four of the number, including three half-breeds under the age of twenty, placed their names on the *Black-Robe's* list. This surprised Father Ravoux, since it was a matter of eighteen years since he had worked among them, while the ministers present had been laboring among them for a quarter of a century. Ravoux spent all available time before the execution of the sentence in instructing the Indians in the faith, preparatory to the reception of baptism. The half-breeds received Holy Communion for the first time at six o'clock on Christmas morning. At four o'clock that afternoon, Father Sommereisen joined Father Ravoux to help administer baptism. The number of Father Ravoux's neophytes had increased since the names were first enrolled on the lists. On the morning of December 26, the time set for the execution, "At a little after nine o'clock, the Reverend Father Ravoux entered the prison again to perform the closing religious exercises. The guard fell back as he came in, the Indians ranging themselves around the room. The Father addressed the condemned at some length, and appeared much affected. He kneeled on the floor in their midst, and prayed with them, all following and uniting with him in an audible voice. They appeared like a different race of beings while going through these religious exercises. Their voices were low and humble, and every exhibition of Indian

bravado was banished. While Father Ravoux was speaking to the Indians, and repeating, for the hundredth time, his urgent request that they must think to the last of the Great Spirit before whom they were about to appear, Provost Marshal Redfield entered and whispered a word in the ear of the good priest, who immediately said a word or two in French to Henry Milrod, a half-breed, who repeated it in Dacotah to the Indians, who were all lying down around the prison. In a moment every Indian stood erect, and as the Provost Marshal opened the door, they fell in behind him with the greatest alacrity."¹⁶ Of the thirty-eight who were executed on the morning of December 26, 1862, thirty-three had chosen to die in the Catholic Church; three were baptized by Rev. Mr. Williamson; and two went to the scaffold as pagans.¹⁷

The year following, Father Ravoux baptized one hundred and eighty-four of the three hundred Sioux who were encamped near Fort Snelling. Of these many were little children.¹⁸ Father Francis Pierz, a short time later, visited them in the company of Ravoux and preached to them through an interpreter. Together they baptized fourteen children. Father Ravoux felt at the time that it would not be difficult to convert the Sioux nation if it were possible to place a young priest among them. Father Pierz interceded for the Indians with General Sibley and vainly begged Bishop Thomas L. Grace to spend a priest; but lack of priests and money apparently made this impossible.¹⁹

Ravoux showed interest not only in the Sioux of the Mississippi but also in the Sioux of the Plains within the area of the modern states of the Dakotas. Although no missions were established among them before 1864, they were visited from time to time not only by Father Ravoux, but by the famous

¹⁶ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, December 28, 1862.

¹⁷ Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 72-81; *Annals* (London), XXIV, 194-202.

¹⁸ Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 81 f.

¹⁹ *Berichte*, XXXIII, 33 f.

Pierre-Jean de Smet, S. J., and Christian Hoechen, S. J. The hunters from the Red River were as a general rule accompanied by a priest on the prairie, so that the Indians had occasional contact with the chaplains of the hunts.

Father de Smet, while stationed at the Potawatomie mission of St. Marys in modern Kansas, decided to assume the rôle of peacemaker between the Indians of his mission and the Sioux, and also if possible to preach among the Sioux. On April 29, 1839, he embarked for the Sioux country. On board the steamboat he found a former acquaintance, Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, who was conducting explorations in the Indian country. Because of low water, De Smet did not reach his destination until May 11; when the Yanktons approached and invited him to a feast. At the close of it, he made known his object to establish a lasting peace between the Potawatomes and Sioux. Points of differences existing between the two nations were discussed; then each provision of the terms of the proposed peace was explained and submitted to the assembled Indians. The Sioux were finally persuaded to present gifts to the orphans of the Potawatomes whom they had killed and to smoke the peace calumet. When the council was terminated, the missionary dwelt upon the Apostles' Creed and baptized about twenty children. To a Canadian he confided the task of teaching prayers to the children. The missionary then took his departure, as it would have been useless to linger longer, for the Indians were breaking camp to follow the buffaloes which were moving to the western ranges.²⁰

In September, 1840, De Smet and his companions on the journey from the Rocky Mountains stopped at Fort Union. Leaving here, September 23, for the village of the Mandans, they met *en route* a war party of fifteen Assiniboin Indians. They found some fields cultivated with care in the villages of the Ari-

²⁰ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 323-327; Chittenden and Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet*, S. J., I, 186-192; *Annals* (Dublin), IV, 43-46.

caras and Mandans. On October 6, they headed for Fort Pierre. On the third day they met a party of Yanktons and Santees and, two days later, some of the Blackfeet Indians. The latter, whose curiosity was excited by De Smet's cassock and crucifix took him to their village to spend the night. When they expressed their desire for instruction, he was unable to explain the truths of religion to them, because his interpreter did not understand the idiomatic Sioux sufficiently to make himself understood. From the village of the Blackfeet, De Smet and his companions, accompanied by some of the Blackfeet, continued to Fort Pierre, where they spent a few days, and thence to Fort Vermillion and down the Missouri to Council Bluffs and to St. Louis.²¹ De Smet was again at Fort Union in September, 1842, for three days before beginning the descent of the Missouri.²² In four years he visited the fort for the third time, October 11, 1846, remaining a day and baptizing five half-breed children. At Fort Berthold, on October 19, he found that the Grosventre Indians, whose main village was there, had planted their fields with maize, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. The Aricara Indians visited him, October 20, at the Knife River where the missionary and his party spent the night. He extracted a promise from the Aricaras that henceforth they would greet the white men with a peace calumet in the hand. The next morning, he breakfasted at Fort Madison or Mandan; and later in the day, he came across the winter quarters of the Aricaras, by whom he was most cordially welcomed. At the encampment of Mr. Goulé, clerk of the American Fur Company, in the neighborhood of Sandstone Buttes, he baptized several half-breed children. A few days were spent at Fort Pierre as guest of Mr. Picotte, chief agent on the Missouri for the American Fur Company. On November

²¹ *Berichte*, XV, 42-48; De Smet, *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses et séjour chez les Tribus Indiennes de l'Oregon*, 75-93; Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet*, I, 243-259.

²² *Ibid.*, I, 400 ff.; De Smet, *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses*, 375.

3, Father de Smet and his party left Fort Pierre in a large and comfortable boat which Picotte provided for the missionary and which he had filled with provisions. Two days later, thirteen half-breeds received baptism at Fort Bouis on the Great Bend of the Missouri. The next day, the party visited Colin Campbell, one of the best interpreters in the Sioux country, at Fort Lookout where there were a large number of Sioux encamped. The missionary baptized sixteen of the children of the half-breeds in the presence of these Sioux and afterwards held a council with about thirty chiefs and braves. They were told of the conversion of the Rocky Mountain tribes and of Father de Smet's visit to the Blackfeet Indians. They were asked if they were willing to embrace the faith and listen to the missionaries. Their answer was in the affirmative. Four children of Canadian and Sioux parentage living nine miles from the fort were baptized by Father de Smet, as were also seven at Fort Vermillion on November 13.²³

Through the visit to Mendota of some persons from Fort Pierre, Father Ravoux learned of Catholics among the white families living on the banks of the Missouri and also of a great number of Sioux who gladly would receive a missionary. Accordingly, on July 5, 1847, Ravoux set out for the Missouri River. At Traverse des Sioux, he waited for provisions and other articles necessary for the journey. These were brought up in a barge which Henry Sibley had sent to receive a load of furs brought from Pembina by Norman Kittson,²⁴ the agent at

²³ Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet*, II, 604-610.

²⁴ Norman Kittson entered the employ of the American Fur Company in 1830. Nine years later he set up an independent trading post at Cold Spring above Fort Snelling. In 1843 he became a special partner in the American Fur Company and had charge of all business on the head waters of the Minnesota River and along the British lines. Pembina was his headquarters. He served four sessions in the Minnesota legislature, being elected for the first session in 1851 and reelected in 1853. In 1854, he entered into partnership with William H. Forbes under the firm name of "Forbes and Kittson" to engage in the general Indian trade. Four years later the firm dissolved partnership, and the same year Kittson became

that place. In a conversation with Kittson, Ravoux learned that the half-breeds at Pembina were desirous of having a priest in their midst, but no mention was made of the possibility of having Father George Belcourt resident among them. Father Ravoux baptized a child before continuing on his way. He had an opportunity while on this journey to observe more closely the liquor traffic among the Indians. Twice he met Indians transporting whiskey to a tribe of Iowas. A keg of three or four gallons could be had in exchange for a horse. On the sixteenth of the month, several Sioux Indians visited him and asked for liquor. The missionary had none to give them; but he availed himself of this opportunity to give instructions in religion, as he did in all the camps of the Sioux which he visited on his way. In reporting the mission journey and the work carried on among the Sioux to Bishop Loras, Father Ravoux wrote: "Unless the sale of liquor to the Indians be soon arrested, we must expect to hear of the most terrible crimes. Last winter, six persons at least were killed, in the neighborhood of the river St. Pierre, by the fatal consequences of drink. The intoxicated savage is beyond control: friends are slain by friends, and brothers fall by brothers' hands. . . . It is the duty of the government to make every exertion to put a stop to this dreadful abuse. I think that if congress were well informed of the innumerable evils resulting from the sale of liquor to the Indians, it would find some method to enforce the laws which prohibit such sales. . . . It is almost impossible to hope for any good among the Indians, where the sale of intoxicating liquors is permitted."²⁵ The party travelled through Lac qui Parle almost due west to Fort Pierre, which was reached on July 30. Around the fort were eighty tents of different bands of Sioux Indians who were trans-

Mayor of St. Paul. In 1860 he became interested in the Red River Transportation Company, which established a line of steamers and barges on the Red River of the North. He held large interests in the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad.

²⁵ *U. S. Cath. Mag.*, VII, 20.

acting business with the federal agent. The chiefs of the Blackfeet, Iowa, Cheyenne, Mandan, and Aricara Indians were present. Father Ravoux spent ten days among them instructing them. Two interpreters in the service of the garrison, Louis Freniere and Joseph Inette, assisted Ravoux in his intercourse with the Sioux. Sixty-eight children were baptized, of whom fifty-five were of the Sioux nation and thirteen of white or mixed parentage; one couple were married. On August 9, the missionary left Fort Pierre for Fort Bouis, where he found forty Sioux families encamped around the garrison. He instructed them and baptized eighteen children and an old man of eighty years who had been ill for some time. The missionary received an urgent invitation from the Indians and the agent to remain among the Sioux. As he had only a leave of absence from Mendota for two to three months, he could not comply with their request. A steamboat, on its way up the Missouri, stopped to discharge goods at Fort Bouis. Father Ravoux grasped what seemed to him to be an opportunity to visit the Mandan and Grosventre Indians. Five days after embarking, two steam pipes burst; and the journey was brought to an end. With some repairs, the boat turned back to St. Louis. On August 26, a stop was made at Fort Vermillion, where Father Ravoux baptized a young Sioux woman. In this region he was no stranger, for he had visited here two years before, in August, 1845.²⁶ He went to St. Louis and thence took a steamer up the Mississippi to St. Paul.²⁷

Although Father de Smet had acted as peacemaker between the Potawatomes and Sioux in 1839 and had passed along the Missouri and met several of the tribes in 1840, 1842, and 1846, it was not until the summer of 1848 that he visited them in the interest of establishing a mission. Setting out from St. Louis, he ascended the Missouri to Bellevue and then travelled on

²⁶ *Catholic Herald*, XIV, 1.

²⁷ *U. S. Cath. Mag.*, VII, 19-25, 84-87; Ravoux, *Reminiscences*, 15-20, Baptismal Register of Father Ravoux among the Sioux (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

horseback over the prairie for twenty-five days. During this journey, he encountered inconveniences in the way of lack of water and wood and annoyances from swarms of mosquitoes. Four miles from the mouth of the Niobrara River, he visited the Poncas. He found among them a sufficiently instructed half-breed who promised to act as a tribal catechist. Colin Campbell, who had earlier been his host at Fort Lookout, acted as his interpreter through the Sioux country. An affair which happened at Fort Pierre a couple of days after the missionary's arrival there helped somewhat to expedite his mission. The Ogallalas and Crows had met in battle, and the former had been defeated by the latter. The Crows had carried off the daughter of Chief Red Fish of the Ogallala tribe. The father came to De Smet and begged him to pray for the return of his daughter. This De Smet agreed to do if Red Fish would give up the practice of unprovoked war. As Red Fish hastened to tell his band what had taken place between the missionary and himself, there appeared the daughter freed from her captors. De Smet baptized six adults during his visit and estimated that several hundred half-breed and Indian children had received baptism among the Sioux. Before leaving the Indians, he distributed medals of Pius IX among them. In his contact with the Sioux, he sounded their dispositions toward the adoption of Christianity and found them less docile than the Indians who dwelt west of the Rocky Mountains. About the end of October, 1848, he left the uplands of the Niobrara and Mankizita or White Earth rivers for Fort Bouis. At Fort Bouis, he set off in a skiff to return to St. Louis. Four months were consumed from the time Father de Smet left St. Louis until his return. On his journey, he was well received by the officers and agents at Fort Pierre and Fort Bouis. This had ever been his experience at the several forts which he visited from time to time on his journeys up and down the Missouri.²⁸

²⁸ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 26, 36-49, 57; Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet*, II, 616-636.

Father Christian Hoecken, S. J., visited the American Fur Company's post at Vermillion in 1850. He attempted to go from there to Fort Pierre, but the James River was so high that he found it impossible to find a ford though he travelled along its banks for several days. Unusually severe weather overtook Father Hoecken and his companion, who suffered so severely from frozen feet, nose, and ears, that they gave up the attempt to reach Fort Pierre and returned to Fort Vermillion on December 8. Here several days were spent in instructing and baptizing people who lived around the fort. At the mouth of the Big Sioux River, the missionary met the Yanktons and other Sioux tribes assembled in council. They were desirous of having a missionary among them and hoped to facilitate the reception of one by assuring Father Hoecken that "The missionaries shall not perish with hunger among us; we will bring them an abundance of buffalo-robcs and buffalo meat, so that they can purchase clothes for the children who will be confided to them."²⁹ Hoecken baptized fourteen persons in the three days which he spent in instructing them.³⁰ This was his last visit; for in the following year while on the steamship *St. Ange* in company with Father de Smet on their way to the Rocky Mountains, he died of cholera.³¹

Father de Smet continued the journey after the burial of his companion. The Yanktons were at the Great Bend of the Missouri awaiting the arrival of the steamship. The women gave dry wood in exchange for tobacco, lead, flour, sugar, and coffee. There was, the Indians informed them, an epidemic of small-pox at Fort Bouis and its neighborhood. At Father de Smet's request, he was put ashore and in two hours' time was among the sick. He passed the night with them and baptized all the little children not yet baptized. At Fort Pierre he baptized

²⁹ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 273.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 262-273; *Iowa Catholic Historical Review*, I, 27 f.

³¹ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 61-65; Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet*, II, 638-642.

eighty-two white and Indian children. He spent two days at the Fort of the Aricaras, instructing and baptizing children. Proceeding through the Mandan village, he stopped at Fort Berthold, a village of the Grosventres of the Missouri. The chief begged for baptism for his two little boys and several members of his family. The other members of the tribes had been baptized by Father George Belcourt, who had visited them on several occasions. On July 14, the party reached Fort Union. During his stay here, De Smet said daily Mass at the fort, and baptized twenty-nine little children in Forts Union and William, which were only three miles apart. Before the middle of September, Father de Smet arrived at the mouth of the Horse River, where a great council of all Indians south of the Missouri, east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the Texas and Mexico boundary lines was being held for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with the national government. This gave De Smet an opportunity to baptize about sixty-one half-breeds and a great many Indians, some of whom were from the area of the Dakotas.³² Passing down the Missouri from Fort Benton to St. Louis in September, 1859, De Smet met thousands of Indians of various tribes, as the Crow, Assiniboin, Grosventre, Mandan, Aricara, and Sioux. He was received everywhere with marks of respect as he spent a couple of days with each tribe.³³ Early in May, 1862, the missionary was again on his way up the Missouri on the steamboat *Spread Eagle* captained by Charles P. Chouteau, a member of the Chouteau family of St. Louis famous as fur capitalists and promoters of steam navigation on the Missouri. A little chapel was prepared for De Smet, who offered daily Mass. At the various places and stations there were large or small camps of Indians. When the boat stopped for the distribution of federal annuities and gifts, De Smet made

³² *Ibid.*, II, 642-652; De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 69-78, 100-105.

³³ De Smet, *Lettres Choisies*, III, 89 f., 117; Chittenden and Richardson, *Father de Smet*, II, 774 f.

use of the time by visiting the Indians in their wigwams and cabins. They listened to his teachings. The mothers brought him children to baptize. An old Yankton woman crawled on her hands and feet to the missionary for baptism. In all the missionary's meetings and visits, he baptized more than nine hundred children. This year, however, he found it impossible to penetrate to any great distance into the Sioux country because of the uprising which occurred, because, as Father de Smet wrote, "the unhappy Indians are often wronged, insulted and outraged beyond measure by the whites, and there is no recourse open to them for the obtaining of justice. Driven to desperation, they dig up the war hatchet and utter the cry of vengeance against the pale-faces, whom they consider their enemies. . . ." ³⁴ His voyage up the Missouri in the spring and early summer of 1863 was practically a repetition, as far as the Dakota area was concerned, of the journey of the preceding year. ³⁵

Father de Smet's work among the Indians of the Dakota area was confined to those along the Missouri River and to the south and west of it. The great hunting ground to the east and north of the Missouri within this region was frequented in the western and northwestern sections by the allied Chippewa and Assiniboin, and in the southeastern by the Sioux. Most of the hunting on the prairie was within the confines of the United States. It was customary for the hunters, half-breeds with Indians in their wake, to make two annual hunts of several weeks' duration, in June and in September. Often the hunters were accompanied by a chaplain from St. Boniface or some other mission under the jurisdiction of Bishop Provencher. Such a missionary carried with him his chapel tent and all requisites for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Occasionally, he had contact with Indians and half-breeds other than those of his party, and, if he found it opportune, he made an effort to speak to them of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 785.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 783 ff., 790; De Smet, *Lettres Choisies*, III, 144 f.

the things of God, through an interpreter if need be, and with the parents' consent to baptize the children of the tribe. Naturally a child in danger of death was often baptized on the missionary's responsibility.³⁶

Father Dumoulin, while stationed at Pembina, was the first missionary who accompanied the hunters. In the fall of 1822, he was on the prairie looking after the spiritual welfare of the hunters, instructing neophytes, and taking some part in the hunt in order to obtain means for meeting the expenses of the mission at Pembina.³⁷ Four years later, Father John Harper left St. Boniface toward the end of December, 1826, to follow the Red River to Pembina and on to Grand Forks to minister to the Catholic settlers. In August of the next year, he was with the hunters on the prairie.³⁸

The chaplain for the expeditions of 1834, 1836, 1837, and 1838 was Father Charles Poiré.³⁹ On August 4, 1837, Bishop Provencher wrote from Red River: "Yesterday, I received a letter from Father Poiré dated from the prairies at a very great distance from here. He sends good news for the country which at this moment is indeed destitute: the hunters have found an abundance of buffaloes, which will make them return heavily laden. There are over seven hundred carts in this caravan."⁴⁰ The hunters returned with their seven hundred and thirty-nine carts loaded with the spoils of the chase. Since it required the hides, pemmican and tallow of ten buffaloes to make a load for a cart, about seventy-four hundred buffaloes were brought back by the party. With hides selling at about five dollars each, the hunters probably cleared from the June hunt of 1837 something

³⁶ *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, X, 45 f.; *Christian Advocate and Journal*, XII, 14.

³⁷ Letter of Father Dumoulin to Archbishop Plessis, Pembina, November 13, 1822 (transcript), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 78.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 116, 122.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 137, 140, 154, 167, 169, 171 f.

⁴⁰ Translated from the French as given in *Ibid.*, III, 169.

in the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollars for skins alone. The hides of the buffaloes consumed by the hunters on the prairie may have numbered over two thousand.⁴¹

Father Joseph Mayrand accompanied the hunters on the second expeditions of 1838 and 1840, while Father John Thibault was chaplain of the first hunt of 1840.⁴² On September 9, 1845, Father Belcourt set out with the hunters. The route taken differed somewhat from the ordinary one. Because of another party to the northwest, Belcourt's group confined themselves to the south and southwest. They hunted in the vicinity of Rush Lake, Devil's Lake, Cottonwood Lake, Dogden and the Sheyenne River. There were about three hundred persons in the hunt, or less than a third of the number engaged in the first hunt of the following year. Father Belcourt offered daily Mass on the prairie and gave instructions to sixty-eight children. The hunters, after killing about eighteen hundred buffaloes, which would net them a good profit for less than two month's work, broke camp, October 16, and returned to the settlements.⁴³ In June, 1846, the hunters begged Father Belcourt to go with them again to the prairie. Bishop Provencher granted him leave of absence from his mission of St. Paul for a short time in order to gratify the wishes of the half-breeds and Indians. Belcourt left his mission on the twenty-eighth of the month and joined the party two days later. For some time previous, sickness had been prevalent among the children of the Indians and half-breeds. The hunt became imperative since means of sustenance were lacking. They had entertained fear that the entire camp of hunters with their families might succumb to sickness on the prairie, and that no priest would be present to administer the sacraments to the dying. Father Belcourt found himself occupied day and night among the sick and dying ministering to the

⁴¹ *Christian Advocate and Journal*, XII, 14.

⁴² *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 178, 185, 193.

⁴³ N. Dak. Hist. Soc. Collections, V, 134-154; *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, VII, 35-49.

health of both body and soul. The heat became intense. There was not sufficient food to supply the thousand persons who made up the hunt. While some game was killed, it was impossible to find an adequate supply for the wants of the party. Three and four deaths occurred daily. The sick Indians, not yet Christians, asked to be baptized. Forty of the newly baptized died almost immediately upon the reception of the sacrament. The number of deaths increased until it reached eight a day. Father Belcourt's supply of medicine, brought from the mission, was exhausted. To add to the hardships, they found themselves, about the middle of July, in the neighborhood of the Sioux and were obliged to fortify their camp by forming an entrenchment around it with their carts. A party of Assiniboina joined them one evening. Belcourt left the camp in company with six half-breeds to go to Fort Berthold, near the villages of the Gros-ventres and Mandans, in order to obtain a supply of medicine from the federal agent. After securing the medicine, the missionary spent two hours instructing about one hundred of the principal men of the two nations. At the close of the instruction, he baptized twelve children. The approach of night prevented him from baptizing others; for it was necessary to be on the way in order to avoid the Sioux. The Mandan Indians wished to keep the missionary in their midst and offered to build him a house should he stay. While with the hunters, Father Belcourt daily celebrated Mass on the prairie as he had on the preceding fall hunt. On Sundays, he celebrated High Mass and followed it with an instruction in the Indian language. His congregation of Indians and half-breeds assisted at Mass and listened to the instruction, sitting or kneeling on the grass.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 70-75; *U. S. Cath. Mag.*, VII, 85; VIII, 313-316; De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 57. The account of the fall hunt as it is given in Father Belcourt's letter of November 25, 1845, published in *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, VII, 35-49 (English translation in *N. Dak. Hist. Soc. Collections*, V, 134-154), and his letter of August 6, 1846, published in *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, VII, 70-75, which gives the account of the June, 1846, hunt, are com-

The chaplain for the 1847 expedition was Father Henry Faraud.⁴⁵ Brother Dubé went as catechist on the two hunts of 1848. The "little Brother," as the hunters called him, made such a favorable impression that many of those who were with him still spoke of him twenty years after the hunts had taken place.⁴⁶ Father Maisonneuve accompanied by Father Tissot, two missionaries recently arrived from France, made the two trips to the prairie in 1849.⁴⁷ The Pembina mission had been reopened. From the time of its reestablishment to the time that the care of the mission was assigned to the priests of the diocese of St. Boniface after Father Goiffon's departure, the hunting parties from the north and the south of the line did not unite but travelled as two parties; one under the chaplaincy of a priest from the diocese of St. Boniface; the other under that of a missionary assigned to Pembina. Of course a priest was not always available.⁴⁸ Father Louis Francis Richer-Lafèche, later Bishop of Three Rivers, was chaplain of the Canadian group of hunters for 1850. Father Albert Lacombe, who was stationed at Pembina at the time, acted as chaplain for the hunters south of the line. It was during this expedition that Father Lacombe visited the Fort of the Mandans.⁴⁹ Father Belcourt, on taking

bined in a letter written by Father Belcourt to Bishop Loras from Minnesota, February 16, 1850, and published in the *Annals* (London), XII, 234-247. The February 16, 1850, letter presumably describes a hunt which took place in 1849 while Father Belcourt was stationed at Pembina, but in reality is a recital of the events of the fall hunt of 1845 and the summer hunt of 1846.

⁴⁵ Taché, *Vingt Années de Missions* (1866 ed.), 20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 32 f.

⁴⁸ It is probable that other priests of the diocese of St. Boniface who were stationed on the Red River missions between 1825 and 1860, may have accompanied the hunters to the prairie. Among them were Fathers Francis Boucher (1827-1833), Jean Darveau (1841-1844), and Joseph Bourassa (1844-1856).

⁴⁹ *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, X, 50-69. Father Lafèche often jokingly claimed to be pastor of Wild Rice, North Dakota, because of his frequent visits to it with the hunters.—N. Dak. Hist. Soc., *Collections*, II, Part I, Appendix, 22.

up residence at Pembina, in 1848, thought it would be advisable for the government to check hunters coming across the line from killing buffaloes within the confines of the United States, as he pointed out that the Hudson's Bay Company was being enriched at the expense of the American Fur Company.⁵⁰

Meanwhile the Winnebago tribe of Indians was removed, in the summer of 1848, from their old habitat in Iowa to a reservation west of the Mississippi and north of the Minnesota rivers between the Crow Wing and Watab rivers. Bishop Joseph Cretin, first bishop of the diocese of St. Paul, returning from consecration in France on January 26, 1851, brought back two priests and four seminarians. Three of these served on the Indian missions for a short time, Canon Francis de Vivaldi and Marcellin Peyragrosse at Long Prairie, and Father John Fayolle at Pembina.⁵¹

Francis de Vivaldi, the first of these priests to receive an appointment, was assigned to the Winnebago reservation at Long Prairie and commenced his labors in the summer of 1851. Here, in addition to the Indians, he found about twenty families of half-breeds. With the aid of the latter, he procured a log cabin which was repaired and converted into a chapel under the patronage of Our Lady of Seven Dolors. The school opened by the missionary was attended at first by the half-breeds and a few Indians. He prepared the former for the reception of Holy Communion, which they received on All Saints' Day, 1851. On Christmas day of the same year, he baptized twenty catechumens whom he had been instructing for some time: and later, during the winter of 1852, he baptized a number of children. About this time he was given Mr. Peyragrosse as an assistant. In January, 1852, Bishop Cretin visited the mission for the pur-

⁵⁰ Letter of Father Belcourt to H. H. Sibley, Pembina, January 9, 1850, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letter of Father Belcourt to Governor Ramsey, Pembina, January 9, 1850, Indian Office Files, Minnesota, M 735.

⁵¹ *Acta et Dicta*, I, 39-43.

pose of administering confirmation to thirty of the congregation. At the same time, the Sisters of St. Joseph, who had recently opened a foundation in St. Paul (1851), took over the training of the Indian and half-breed girls in the mission school at Long Prairie.⁵²

On January 1, 1853, Alexander Ramsey on the part of the government and Bishop Joseph Cretin on the part of the Church entered into a contract whereby the government made annual payments to Bishop Cretin, who assumed entire direction of the school fund of the Winnebago Indians for five years.⁵³ Father de Vivaldi submitted a report of the school on September 9, 1853: The average daily attendance of pupils was given as sixty-two. The children were taught reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and geography. The boys engaged in manual labor as part of their education; in winter, they cut wood for the school; during the spring, they tilled the school farm under the direction of a skilled farmer. The girls were engaged in making clothing for the pupils. It was reported that the former agent, Abram Fridley, had withheld the payment necessary for the support of the school and deprived the pupils of the governmental allotment of clothing. Therefore, since January, 1853, the missionary had been compelled to advance payment for teachers' and interpreter's services and for provisions, clothing, and books. For this he had received no compensation.⁵⁴ The non-payment of the educational fund according to the stipulations of the contract was taken up by Bishop Cretin with Alexander Ramsey. The bishop deemed it inexpedient to advance

⁵² *Annals* (London), XIII, 331-336.

⁵³ Annual Report of J. E. Fletcher, Winnebago Agency, September 10, 1853, inclosed with letter of W. A. Gorman, St. Paul, September 19, 1853, Indian Office Files, Winnebago M 846; Letter of Bishop Cretin to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, St. Paul, January 6, 1853 (Hickey transcripts), original in the Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris.

⁵⁴ School Report of Rev. Francis de Vivaldi, Winnebago Agency, Long Prairie, September 9, 1853, inclosed in letter of W. A. Gorman, September 19, 1853, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 846.

further funds for the purchase of agricultural implements and provisions, and for the payment of teachers' salaries. He was finding it almost impossible to recover money advanced for the mission school.⁵⁵ A new agent in the person of Jonathan E. Fletcher relieved the situation. He complied with the terms of the contract.

In 1853, negotiations were again opened by the government with the Winnebago to make some change in the location of the reservation. As prairie Indians, they were finding it difficult to adapt themselves to the wooded country assigned them. From 1853 up to the time of their removal to the Blue Earth River reservation near Mankato, conditions were unsettled on the Long Prairie reservation. Some of the Indians took up encampment between the Clearwater and Crow rivers which for the time was considered as a location for their new reservation. The school continued in operation at Long Prairie but with fewer children in attendance. Agent Fletcher reported that Father de Vivaldi as superintendent of the school "has manifested great interest in the welfare of these Indians by his efforts in their behalf." He further noted: "Two Sisters of Charity"⁵⁶ have been employed as teachers, and during a part of the year an additional teacher and an interpreter employed. The dwelling house occupied by the teachers was, last winter, destroyed by fire, by which they sustained much inconvenience and loss. A part of the school house has since been repaired and fitted for a dwelling and is now occupied as such by the teachers."⁵⁷ The cultivation of the school field of seventeen acres was emphasized by the agent, who expressed pleasure in the industry exhibited by the Indian boys. All apparently went well until the spring of 1855. At this time, Fletcher asked that district manual labor schools be established when the Indians were removed to the new reser-

⁵⁵ Letters of Bishop Cretin to Alexander Ramsey, St. Paul, May 3, 1853, and June 17, 1853, Ramsey Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁵⁶ Sisters of St. Joseph.

⁵⁷ Annual Report of J. E. Fletcher, Indian Agent, Winnebago Agency, September 9, 1854, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 1238.

vation at Blue Earth, on the grounds that the superintendent, Canon de Vivaldi, was not abiding by the terms of the contract and the children had not been provided with clothing and provisions, nor received the stipulated instruction.⁵⁸

The school at Long Prairie was closed May 18, 1855, to be reopened when the Indians were again settled. On November 19, 1855, the school opened again under the same superintendency. Fletcher described the new schoolhouse, "the house is 48 by 18 feet, one story—2 rooms & a hall in the center, a door into the hall—a partition across the hall—no communication between the school rooms—Seven desks in each room, with permanent and moveable seats to accommodate 50 scholars. We claim it is the best log school ever built."⁵⁹ When the school had been in operation about two months on the new reservation, it was found necessary to remove the superintendent because of neglect of duty in not giving his personal attention to the school and not conducting it in conformity with the stipulations of the contract of January 1, 1853. A petition had been drawn up by some of the Indians on January 12, 1856, charging the agent with "gross infidelity." On investigation it was found that the Indians had been influenced in their attitude against the agent by the superintendent.⁶⁰ The matter was taken under advisement by Governor Gorman, who reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as follows: "It is proper here to remark that, I deemed it my duty to suspend the Superintendent, which was employed in the School as I found the Statements and proofs offered by the agent abundantly confirmed, and Bishop Cretin

⁵⁸ Report of views of Agent Fletcher in regard to the future welfare of the Indians, Winnebago Agency, April 31, 1855, inclosed in letter of W. A. Gorman, St. Paul, June 9, 1855, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 1501.

⁵⁹ Fletcher's estimate of improvements on Blue Earth Co. reservation, Winnebago Agency, January 2, 1856, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, F 56.

⁶⁰ Letter of Agent Fletcher to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Manypenny, Winnebago Agency, Blue Earth, March 25, 1856, Indian Office Files, Winnebago F 22; Agent Fletcher to Governor Gorman relative to the conduct of the Winnebago Indians, Winnebago Agency, January 21, 1856, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 65.

concurred in the propriety of my action and has provided another to take his place.”⁶¹ The Sisters of St. Joseph had at all times given satisfaction in the mission school and conducted it, as far as lay in their power, in accordance with the stipulations of the contract. They had at the time of the removal of the Indians to the Blue Earth reservation taken up their work again in the school on the new reservation.⁶² With the removal of the superintendent, the mission school was closed. From 1856 to the time of the removal of the Winnebago from Minnesota following the Sioux Massacre of 1862, the Catholic Indians on the reservation were visited by Father Valentine Sommereisen, who was stationed at Mankato.⁶³

There were, then, no missions established among the Sioux, Mandan, Aricara, and Grosventre Indians within the area of the Dakotas before 1864. The one mission established among the Sioux of the Mississippi at Little Prairie or Chaska was only continued two years. These Indians of the Northwest had, however, contact with missionaries as early as the date of the first establishment at Pembina.

⁶¹ Governor W. A. Gorman to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, St. Paul, February 15, 1856, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 65.

⁶² Agent Fletcher to Governor Gorman relative to the conduct of the Winnebago Indians, Winnebago Agency, January 21, 1856, Indian Office Files, Winnebago, M 65. In an account of "The Mission in Long Prairie" in *Acta et Dicta*, III, 276-282, a statement is made (282) that the Sisters of St. Joseph did not take up their work among the Winnebago on their removal to the Blue Earth reservation. Fletcher reports them as present on the Blue Earth reservation.

⁶³ Dunigan's *Catholic Almanac* (1858), 148; (1859), 198 f.

CHAPTER V

PEMBINA AND SAINT JOSEPH (1848-1864)

The history of the missions among the Indians and half-breeds of the area of North Dakota was at all times, certainly up to 1864, connected with the history of the diocese whose nucleus was the mission of St. Boniface, established on the Red River in 1818.

In 1831, when Bishop Provencher returned to St. Boniface from a visit to Quebec and Montreal, he was accompanied by Father George Anthony Belcourt, a missionary who was destined to spend more than a quarter of a century among the Chippewa Indians and half-breeds of the Northwest. Belcourt acquired a perfect knowledge of the Chippewa language and compiled a French-Chippewa dictionary, which he was financially unable to have printed. The Smithsonian Institution, in 1857, offered to publish it for him provided he would spend some time in Washington reading the proof, but Belcourt could not avail himself of the offer because of lack of time and traveling expenses.¹ Father Belcourt labored in the Canadian missions under the jurisdiction of Bishop Provencher from 1831 to April 10, 1847. In September, 1845, and June, 1846, he had accompanied the hunters to the prairie. In November of the latter year, he made known his desire to give up his work at St. Boniface because of difficulties with the Hudson's Bay Company. However he continued during the winter of 1846-1847 instructing missionaries in the Chippewa language in order that

¹ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 131 f.; IV; Letter of Father Belcourt to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pembina, August 15, 1857 (Hickey transcripts), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris. The dictionary was published after Father Belcourt's death under the editorship of Rev. Albert Lacombe,

they might continue his work. On April 10, 1847, he left St. Boniface to go to Montreal.²

From Montreal, he wrote to Henry H. Sibley at Mendota that he would not take up his work again in Canada but that he planned to found a mission at Pembina and other missions south of the boundary line.³ He visioned the new Pembina: It would become a flourishing American settlement, possibly a bishopric; half-breeds and others from across the border would take up their abode and become citizens of the United States; and the lucrative commerce of the Hudson's Bay Company would be diverted to the American Fur Company and its agent, Norman W. Kittson.⁴

Father Belcourt took up his duties at Pembina in March, 1848. The journey from St. Paul had been perilous. Rivers were flooded over their banks. A raft built for the purpose of carrying the carts and other effects across Red Lake River was abandoned in the swift current. The party was hampered for want of means to transport their baggage to Pembina. Much of it had to be left at Red Lake River to be sent for later. At Pembina, the missionary was welcomed by the half-breeds and some Chippewa Indians from Red Lake. These Indians had visited his mission of St. Paul on Rainy Lake while he was stationed there. News of this proposed mission at Pembina preceded him, and steps had been taken to build a temporary chapel of bark to serve until a permanent one could be erected. As the Chippewa dialect was spoken at Pembina, Father Belcourt made plans to open a school in which Chippewa, French, and English would be taught. Before leaving Montreal, he had enlisted two seminarians who promised to join him after their ordination,⁵ but one failed him.

² *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 260 f.

³ Letter of Father Belcourt to H. H. Sibley, Montreal, January 15, 1848, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴ *Op. Cit.*; *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 266.

⁵ *U. S. Cath. Mag.*, VII, 527 f.; *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XII, 125.

The other, Father Albert Lacombe,⁶ left for the West at the end of July, 1849, to join Father Belcourt, who, though alone at Pembina, was engaged in getting his mission into order. His only contact with other missionaries was from the north. In June, 1848, he visited St. Boniface filled with enthusiasm for the work of his new field. His presence in Pembina had begun to draw the half-breeds from the missions in Canada—from St. Boniface, St. Paul and White Horse Plains—where his labors had made him known.⁷ At Christmas, he was able to report to Bishop Loras: "I have succeeded in erecting a building of 30 by 20 feet, which is destined to be the sacristy of a church which I am going to attempt to build next summer. This building serves as a chapel, but although it contains no pews in order that more people may find room there and although we are using the loft, much [more] is necessary that all may enter there."⁸ He had a class of catechumens, Indians and half-breeds, who were very docile to his teaching and who aided him in the construction of the chapel. A house had also been erected by him.⁹

In the spring of 1849, he managed to take a census of Pembina, which he sent to Henry Sibley through Norman Kittson. In acknowledgment, Sibley, promising coöperation, wrote:

. . . The copy of the census you were good enough to supply to Mr. K. has been handed to the Governor, and I took occasion to mention your name in connection with the settlement of Pembina in very favorable & strong terms. Known as I have been for many years to the people of Red River, with whom I have annually had more or less inter-

⁶ Father Albert Lacombe was born in the parish of St. Sulpice, Province of Quebec, February 28, 1827. His theological studies were completed in Montreal. He was ordained June 13, 1849. In 1852, he became a member of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at St. Boniface. From this time until his death on December 12, 1916, he devoted his life to the conversion of the Indians of Western and Northwestern Canada.

⁷ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 266; *Les Cloches de Saint Boniface*, XX, 131.

⁸ *The Witness*, March 21, 1929, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*

course, I need not say that it will give me great pleasure to co-operate with you and Mr. Kittson in any steps which can benefit your people at Pembina. I have just be (*sic*) re-elected by an undivided vote of all the Districts in Minnesota Territory, to represent it in Congress for the next two years. My being in Washington in a position of so much responsibility, will enable me to protect your interests at Pembina to a great extent, and my personal acquaintance with the President, will give me still more facilities for making a proper use of all opportunities which may be afforded me, of doing you all service. With this kindly offer of good feeling on my part, which is dictated not only by my duty and inclination, but by a warm regard for you personally, I hope you will meet it by a frank & free interchange of feeling with Mr. Kittson who has a high respect for you, as well as with other leading citizens of Pembina, and let me know the precise nature of your deliberations, and what particular step you recommend in order to affect favorably the prosperity of your infant settlement. Do you think it would be advisable to have a treaty made with the Indians for the purchase of the valley of the Red River as far down as the line? Would it not [be] well to have custom house officers appointed to reside at Pembina? In fine what course would you advise relative to the means to be taken to humble the pretensions of the Hudson's Bay Company, while they would conduce to the benefit of your own colony. All these things I will be obliged to you if you will give me your views upon. I have already advised the Governor that due attention on his part, to the interests of Pembina would be expected, and as he is a sensible high minded man, you may reasonably hope that he will do all in his power for you.

It will be necessary for you to guard your people against the many false reports, which are constantly put in circulation by designing persons for their own emolument and advantage. Should anything be contemplated by the Government at Washington, which can effect your interests, you may rely upon your receiving immediate information from me. I shall recommend the establishment of a post office at Pembina, although I [am] aware that the Department will not now consent to establish a mail route direct to that point. Still a Post Office there would make the transmission of letters from the nearest offices by every opportunity more direct and certain. I shall do all I can to have your settlement placed upon a proper footing, so as to secure it against all uncertainties for the future. In short I shall do all in my power to help you along. . . .¹⁰

¹⁰ Letter of H. H. Sibley to Father Belcourt, Mendota, August 11, 1849, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.,

Father Lacombe *en route* paid his respects to Bishop Lorras at Dubuque and then came up the river to St. Paul, where he was welcomed by Father Ravoux, whom he aided in St. Paul. Not until late in September was the caravan ready for Pembina. Lacombe soon received a taste of hardship. At Red Lake River, the caravan was held up by the Chippewa and Pillager Indians and relieved of provisions and some effects.¹¹ Father Belcourt came to meet and welcome his assistant. Then Lacombe spent the winter learning the Chippewa tongue under the direction of Father Belcourt and with the aid of the latter's Chippewa grammar and manuscript dictionary. The Indian language had for him a fascination which he explained because of a strain of Chippewa blood. It appears that two hundred years earlier, a Chippewa chief had carried a French maiden into captivity. Father Lacombe traced a descent from them.¹²

One of the problems confronting Father Belcourt in the up-building of Pembina was the inroad made by the Hudson's Bay Company and British subjects on the fur trade. The hunters from across the line continued their customary annual hunts on the prairie. The furs went to the Hudson's Bay Company. The hunters of Pembina found themselves returning from their hunt with carts half loaded, because the hunters from the north had driven the buffaloes westward. It was disheartening work. The half-breeds at Pembina might be authorized to make laws for the settlement, but they found that the Hudson's Bay Company had a total disregard for such laws which could not be enforced. Belcourt appealed to Governor Ramsey and Henry Sibley to exert their influence in putting an end to the fur traffic of the Hudson's Bay Company on the soil of the United States. He suggested that a garrison of troops at Pembina would end the traffic and encourage the settlers to cultivate the fields and

¹¹ Letter of Father Belcourt to Governor Ramsey, Pembina Mountain, September 15, 1850, Indian Office Files, Minnesota, M 1045.

¹² Hughes, *Father Lacombe, The Black Robe Voyageur*, 7, 20 ff.; *Le Père Lacombe "L'Homme au Bon Coeur,"* 36.

gardens, since a fort would provide a profitable market for their produce.¹³ Another problem, accentuated by inundations at Pembina and the failure of the hunts, was the lack of support for the mission.¹⁴ Before the end of 1849, Belcourt was paying a young woman teacher, a housekeeper, a cook, and two men to assist with the work of the mission. The first house built by Father Belcourt was given over to the teacher, housekeeper and cook. Another small house was built. It was in this house that Fathers Belcourt and Lacombe lived.¹⁵ Thus the mission was somewhat expensive.

Father Lacombe made his first visit to St. Boniface with Father Belcourt in November, 1849. At this time, Pembina was included in the proposed diocese of St. Paul. Belcourt's dream of a diocese of Pembina was shattered.¹⁶ Part of the winter of 1849-1850 was spent by Belcourt in visiting the half-breeds and Indians to the west of Pembina. In the second week of January, he left Pembina in a caravan with six men. The chapel and camp equipment and provisions were loaded on to five carts drawn by fifteen dogs. The guide led the way, and the party followed on snowshoes after the dog train. On Creuse River, a tributary of the Pembina, an evening was spent instructing and baptizing some half-breeds. Proceeding westward, the missionary again exercised his ministry at White Mud River. Another day's journey brought him to Turtle Mountains, where there was a village of about thirty huts. Here it was learned that rum was being procured by the half-breeds through the Hudson's Bay Company and that it was working

¹³ Letter of Father Belcourt to Henry Sibley, Pembina, September 25, 1849, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letter of Father Belcourt to Governor Ramsey, Pembina Mt., September 15, 1850, Indian Office Files, Minnesota, M 1045.

¹⁴ Letter of Father Belcourt to Bishop Loras, Pembina, June 12, 1849, Archives of Archdiocese of Dubuque.

¹⁵ *Bul. de Soc. Hist. St. Boniface*, III, 276 f.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 277; *Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, XX, 153; *Acta et Dicta*, I, 39.

the customary havoc. On January 25, Father Belcourt erected a cross on Butte St. Paul, the highest peak of the Turtle Mountains, which received its name at this dedication to the Apostle of the Gentiles. The following morning, Belcourt with a half-breed as guide left for a Mouse River camp of half-breeds. The guide, who claimed to be acquainted with every spot on the prairie and who refused to be guided by a compass, missed the way, and the two travellers, failing to reach their destination, were forced to take shelter in a snow dugout. Father Belcourt shared his blanket with the guide, for the latter had forgotten to carry his. In the morning, another attempt was made to reach the encampment on Mouse River, but to no avail. About sunset, wind and snow forced them to halt and again take shelter in the snow. Father Belcourt feared that the guide would freeze to death. When the wind abated, about midnight, the missionary succeeded in arousing his companion and also the dogs to make an effort to reach the encampment. At four o'clock in the morning, they were back with the half-breeds whom they left two days earlier. It was while on this mission journey that Belcourt had an opportunity to instruct ten Assiniboin Indian families in one of the half-breed encampments at Turtle Mountains. They listened attentively and seemed moved at the thought that the missionary had endured hunger, cold, fatigue, and other hardships for the sake of the Indians. The missionary found that the camp at Long River had increased in numbers since his outward journey. Several half-breeds and Indians, some from his old mission of St. Paul, had joined the group encamped there. He returned to Pembina where Father Lacombe had spent the winter and again took up the burdens of the mission with his assistant. Before the middle of February, sixty Chippewa Indians were receiving instructions preparatory to baptism. The Assiniboins had asked for a priest to prepare them for baptism and the Mandans had for some time been imploring that a missionary be sent to them. There were indications that the Indians would adopt Christianity if instruc-

tion was available. Plans had been made to erect another mission at the foot of Pembina Mountain as soon as the necessary building material should arrive.¹⁷

The half-breeds begged Father Lacombe to go with them as chaplain on the summer hunt of 1850. Pembina was the place of rendezvous for the hunters. With the advent of spring, one encampment after another was abandoned as the hunters and their families turned to Pembina. Lacombe busied himself with preparations for the hunt. The cart which carried his chapel equipment needed repairs, and, in making these, Father Lacombe injured his foot with an ax. The hunters insisted that he continue with them and promised to give him every care needed. On the eve of the hunt, Father Lacombe assembled the band, and opened the council with prayers and hymns, after which the women and children returned to their tents, and the men drew up the regulations which were to govern the party during the weeks spent on the hunt. In the morning after early Mass, the signal for departure was given. Everything was hustle and bustle until the carts were loaded and all were off. The missionaries looked upon the hunting season as the most propitious for the instruction of the aged and infirm men and also the women and children dependent upon the hunters. The day as a rule was spent in instructing those who were left in the camp while the hunters followed the buffaloes on the plains. Because of the nomadic habits of many of the Indians and half-breeds, it was more or less difficult to instruct them at other times unless one followed them to their winter camps. And the priest was pastor of souls, magistrate, and doctor while on the excursion.¹⁸

In the summer of 1850, building operations began at the foot of Pembina Mountain, when the half-breeds obtained consent

¹⁷ *Annals* (London), XII, 245 ff.; *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse de Québec*, IX, 105-119.

¹⁸ Hughes, *Father Lacombe*, 23-33; *Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, XVI, 74; N. Dak. Hist. Soc. *Collections*, II, Part I, Appendix, 25.

from the Indian owners of the land to open the second establishment about thirty miles west of the old site which was so frequently inundated. The missions were growing rapidly but were receiving no aid except what Bishop Provencher was able to give. In January, 1851, Father Belcourt appealed to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for funds to publish a second edition of his Chippewa grammar and a first edition of the dictionary. Only one hundred dollars had been received from the Society during the three years he had spent at Pembina. Four months later, Bishop Cretin added his appeal to that of Father Belcourt. Conditions were such that unless help were forthcoming both Fathers Belcourt and Lacombe would be obliged to leave these missions.¹⁹ In an attempt to alleviate conditions, the Council of Pembina passed the following law:

Considering that all labourers are worthy of their hire and that it is not just that the clergy should always serve us for charity, it is resolved that each married man shall give for the support of the clergy Ten Shillings Sterling per year.²⁰

Although practically all the half-breeds of Pembina were of the Catholic faith, the law met with objections from some of the settlers, especially Norman Kittson, who determined that such exaction could not and would not be made of him.

Father Lacombe spent his second winter (1850-1851) as he had his first at Pembina with a few of his flock. The long days were given to the study of the Indian language. He would have preferred to have been permitted to undergo the hardships experienced by Father Belcourt in his wanderings over the prairie, caring for the Indians and half-breeds in their winter encamp-

¹⁹ Letter of Father Belcourt to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pembina, January 22, 1851 (Hickey transcripts), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris; Letter of Bishop Cretin to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Havre, May 23, 1851, *Ibid.*

²⁰ Letter of Norman Kittson to H. H. Sibley, Pembina, January 2, 1851, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Bond, *Minnesota and Its Resources*, 277.

ments. He was chaplain of the hunt again in the summer of 1851 at which time he visited the Grosventres, but, upon his return to Pembina, he resolved to spend the winter in Montreal, where he could complete plans for entrance into a religious order engaged in the missions of the West.²¹

For some time, Father Belcourt had been considering the advisability of the government drawing up a land cession treaty with the Indians of Pembina. He had carried on a correspondence on the subject with Governor Ramsey and Henry Sibley, and all agreed that it would be feasible. A treaty commission was appointed and, in the summer of 1851, Governor Ramsey and the other members took their way to Pembina to negotiate the treaty. Father Belcourt was not in Pembina at the time of their arrival nor during the negotiations but at his mission of St. Joseph, Pembina Mountain, where he was supervising the erection of a log church. About half a dozen houses and two stores had been built at the new mission. Father Lacombe was at Pembina but took no part in the treaty negotiations. About October 1, Father Lacombe accompanied the commission to St. Paul on his way to Montreal.²² His departure was regretted by Norman Kittson, who wrote that Father Lacombe "is all that a good man should be."²³ Because of the failure of ratification of the treaty of 1851, Father Belcourt went to Washington to lay before the Commissioner of Indian Affairs certain demands of

²¹ *Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, XVI, 59-62; Hughes, *Father Lacombe*, 34-37.

²² Bond, *Minnesota and Its Resources*, 277, 281, 298, 323; Letter of Father Lacombe to Governor Ramsey, St. Paul, October 30, 1851, Ramsey Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

²³ Letter of Norman Kittson to Fred B. Sibley, Pembina, October 10, 1851, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib. Kittson, who for some time had taken an unfriendly attitude to Belcourt, intimates in this letter that Lacombe left Pembina because of differences with Belcourt. There is nothing to verify this in Father Lacombe's statements. In a letter addressed by him to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith of the diocese of Montreal, Montreal, February 1, 1852 (*Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, XVI, 59-62), he speaks of Belcourt in the highest terms and begs the Society to lend its support to him.

the Indians and half-breeds of his missions. He asked on their behalf that another treaty be negotiated as soon as possible so that the half-breeds might be secure in their property rights. He complained of the depredations made on the settlement by the Sisseton Sioux during the absence of the hunters on the hunt, of the traffic in intoxicating liquors carried on by the Hudson's Bay Company, and of the losses sustained by his people because of the encroachments of the Hudson's Bay Company's hunters within the area of Dakota. He asked that steps be taken to prevent an outbreak along the Missouri River south of the Fort of the Mandans which the Indians and half-breeds of Pembina were apparently planning. He asked if he might expect a continuation of the aid he had received from the government in support of his three schools (founded in 1848) for the first time the preceding year (1853).²⁴

Father John Fayolle was assigned to care for the missions during Belcourt's absence. On August 6, 1854, he left St. Paul to join the caravan for Pembina. The journey was filled with the usual hardships and apprehension of attacks from the Sioux. About nine o'clock the evening of August 22, the caravan reached Pembina. The Sioux, who had been lying in ambush at the outskirts of Pembina, were frightened away by the crowd that came out from Pembina to meet it. A month later Belcourt took his departure for Washington to be gone for several months. In June, 1855, Father Fayolle returned to the scene of his former labors at Little Canada.²⁵

Father Belcourt established in his mission a religious community of half-breeds, Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith, whose sole work was the care and instruction of the Indians and half-breeds of the northern part of the diocese of St. Paul. Postulants were sent to Montreal to be educated and trained in the religious life. On their return, they took up their work in

²⁴ N. Dak. Hist. Soc. *Collections*, I, 213-216.

²⁵ *Annals* (London), XIX, 88-93; *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* (1854), 169; (1855), 242; (1856), 147.

an academy which was opened for Indians and half-breeds. Unfortunately, the community did not survive Father Belcourt's final departure from the Dakota missions.²⁶

Belcourt labored alone from Father Lacombe's departure in 1852 until the arrival of Father Joseph Goiffon as an assistant in 1858, with the exception of Father Fayolle's ministry at St. Joseph's from the fall of 1854 to the early summer of 1855. The mission of St. Joseph continued to grow. Inundations caused by the Red River attracted settlers to the more western mission. Bishop Bourget of Montreal had been able to send the missionary some financial assistance. Pembina, since Father Lacombe's departure, had become a mission station visited from St. Joseph. While most of its inhabitants lived by the chase, there were many farmers and mechanics among them and all were gradually settling down to civilized life. They had a saw mill and a grist mill, a threshing machine and a reaper. The erection of a military post, so long desired by Father Belcourt, at the junction of the Pembina and Red rivers, was realized in 1856. The chiefs of the Indians to the west made visits to Belcourt from time to time asking for missionaries, but there was no one to send, and he was without the necessary resources to undertake a mission journey. Hence, he appealed, on the death of Bishop Cretin, to Bishop Loras to make an effort to get an assistant from Europe through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He himself applied to the Society for aid. His mission was in distress. The crops had been devastated by locusts in the summer of 1857. There was suffering everywhere. The Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith, who were conducting an orphanage and instructing about one hundred children in the Chippewa, French, and English languages, had received no financial assistance from the government in 1857.²⁷

²⁶ Joseph Goiffon, *Autobiography* MS., 3, 19 (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letter of Father Belcourt to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pembina, August 15, 1857 (Hickey transcripts), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris; *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac* (1854), 170; (1859), 200.

²⁷ *Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, XIX, 236; *Annals* (London), XIII,

Bishop Alexander Taché of St. Boniface, successor to Bishop Provencher, who had died on June 7, 1853, visited the missions conducted by Father Belcourt from time to time. In May, 1855, he visited St. Joseph's with Father Maisonneuve. In 1858, accompanied by Father Lestanc, he spent a short time in the two missions.²⁸

Father Joseph Goiffon, who had come to St. Paul from the diocese of Belley in France, November 7, 1857, was appointed in the summer of 1858 assistant to Father Belcourt.²⁹ He left St. Paul, August 8, 1858. In the caravan bound for Pembina were Brother Timothy of the Brothers of the Holy Family, who had been serving in the capacity of housekeeper for Father Belcourt for some time, the superior and two postulants of the community of the Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith, and some half-breeds. Father Ravoux had given Goiffon an old carriage of Bishop Cretin's in which to make the journey, but Father Goiffon gave the use of it to the Sister and postulants, and he, himself, made the journey on foot. The regular Red River cart was in evidence for the transportation of merchandise and baggage. The journey appears to have been uneventful. Father Goiffon celebrated Mass on the Sundays during the trip, for it was customary as priests went to and from Pembina that Mass would be celebrated on the prairie or in the woods if they carried the requisites with them. When the caravan arrived at St.

238 ff.; *The Minnesota Democrat*, October 2, 1854, p. 2; October 17, 1855, p. 2; Letter of Father Belcourt to Governor Ramsay, St. Joseph, June 23, 1852, Ramsey Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letters of Father Belcourt to Bishop Loras, Pembina, July 18, 1857; St. Joseph, August 15, 1857 (Hickey transcripts), original in Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Paris; Letter of Father Belcourt to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Pembina, August 15, 1857 (Hickey transcripts), *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Taché, Vingt Années* (1866 ed.), 72, 108.

²⁹ Unless otherwise indicated the material for the history of Father Goiffon's administration at Pembina and St. Joseph's has been taken from Father Goiffon's Autobiography MS., a photostat of which is in the Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

Joseph's mission, Father Goiffon saw a village stretching out about a mile along the left bank of the Pembina River, with small one-story log houses built at some little distance one from the other. He directed his steps to the largest house in the village, which he thought would be the dwelling of Father Belcourt. This, however, proved to be the house occupied by the Sisters. It was fifty by twenty-eight feet in size, a story and a half in height with a basement. The basement, which was divided into six rooms, was given over to the Sisters. The upper part of the house was being used as a chapel until a larger one should be built. Belcourt's house was of one story, sixteen by twenty-four feet in size, divided into two rooms. One room, sixteen by sixteen, served as a kitchen, dining room and living room, the other, eight by sixteen, did duty as a sleeping room and study. Belcourt offered Father Goiffon the poor bed which the room contained, but the latter refused it and slept on the floor as he had on his journey to Pembina wrapped up in a buffalo robe. There was indeed evidence of dire poverty in the missionary's dwelling.

Father Goiffon expected to pass the winter at St. Joseph's, but when the people of Pembina heard of the arrival of a second priest, they demanded that he be stationed at the mission of the Assumption at Pembina, which at the time had about four hundred and twenty-four communicants. At Pembina, he found a poor log church twenty by thirty in size. At one side of it was a small house in which lived two Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith who conducted the school. A log cabin, twelve by twelve, was pointed out as the rectory, which was occupied by a poor family who were unable to vacate until October. When they left, they took with them the planks which served as a floor, the door and the window, which they claimed as their own. The priest then turned carpenter, fitting a door and a window, partitioning the house into four rooms, two below and two above, building a chimney, and making furniture. After this he turned his attention to the log church, which was without benches or

chairs. The congregation was accustomed to sit on the floor. There was an altar with a keyless tabernacle. With a little ingenuity, Father Goiffon contrived a lock and key for it. Then with the assistance of choir boys, he made benches for the church. The church was without a stove but as he wrote "when one is young one can dispense with that."

As soon as Father Goiffon had succeeded in making the place somewhat habitable for the winter, he went to St. Boniface to see Bishop Taché, who gave him a winter's supply of provisions. On his return, he visited his parishioners, four hundred on the American side and twenty-four on the Canadian side of the line. He then spent the time in learning the Chippewa language by copying Belcourt's grammar. In March, 1859, Belcourt left the missions and the diocese of St. Paul to return to Quebec. He had spent almost twenty-eight years in the West. It was because of his untiring zeal that so much was accomplished in the way of colonizing northeastern Dakota and in Christianizing the Chippewa Indians and half-breeds of the region. Thereupon Father Goiffon found both missions on his hands.

In 1859, Father Ravoux, Administrator of the diocese of St. Paul, asked Father Goiffon to come to St. Paul; and Bishop Taché, who made two visits to St. Joseph's and one to Pembina during 1859,³⁰ told Goiffon that the time was auspicious for him to leave his missions, for his parishioners, commencing with June 10, would be gone for at least two months on the hunt. Hence he could make the trip to St. Paul and return before the hunters returned from the hunt. Goiffon on his way to St. Paul hoped to see Father Pierz as he passed through Crow Wing, but that missionary was away on one of his mission journeys. After two weeks in St. Paul, the missionary again made his way to Pembina, and thence to St. Joseph, which was to be his place of residence. The house recently occupied by the religious community was at Father Goiffon's disposal. He found all the half-breeds at St. Joseph practical Catholics who attended Mass in

³⁰ Taché, *Vingt Années*, 126.

all weather though many were compelled to walk three, four and even five miles. The two missions at this time numbered about twelve hundred members. Neither mission church was warmed during the winter.

Father Goiffon accompanied the hunters to the prairie in June, 1860. There were two good reasons for his presence among them. First, they feared an attack by the Sioux, and, second, there was a large number of the young people from fourteen to twenty-two who had not yet received first Holy Communion. Many had no fixed abode but still retained their nomadic habits. It was only during the hunt that it was possible to instruct them. Each evening, Father Goiffon gathered these young people around him. Before the termination of the hunt, the expedition met with the Sioux, who came this time not for war but for peace. They held a council with the hunters with whom they had never been on friendly terms. Father Goiffon was present at the council. He heard the Sioux complain of the treatment they had received at the hands of the whites. They seemed most anxious to conclude peace with the hunters. As Father Goiffon reviewed this affair some years later, it seemed to him that this was a prelude to the events of the year 1862. When they formed their alliance with the hunters, the Sioux must have thought the time was near when they would rise in numbers against the white settlers and traders. The peace concluded in 1860 was faithfully kept by both parties.

After the hunt, Father Goiffon returned with the party to St. Joseph's. Then, in answer to a call from Father Ravoux, he set out for St. Paul. Here he despatched his business in order that he might return in company with a party from St. Boniface. When within a day's journey of Pembina, Goiffon, who was travelling on horseback, hurried ahead of his party in order to celebrate Mass in his mission on the following day. His plans miscarried, however, when he faced a rain storm which changed to a blizzard which a horse could not brave. There was nothing to do but to prepare to spend the night in his buffalo robe. He

found, when he decided to continue his journey two days later, that his horse had succumbed to the cold. Determined to walk the remaining ten miles, he gathered a few effects, but found his limbs so frozen that he could not use them. On Wednesday evening, he dragged himself over to his horse in order that he might use it as a support and a protection against the wind. It would serve neither purpose. Its flesh did, however, serve as food. On the fifth day, the missionary's cries attracted the attention of a Canadian who was passing. Word of his condition was sent to Joseph Rolette at Pembina. He immediately moved him to his house in Pembina, where Father Goiffon remained for three weeks. When Father Lestanc heard of Father Goiffon's condition and that the amputation of the affected members was imperative, he had him brought to the Bishop's House at St. Boniface. Here on December 3, 1860, the right limb was amputated below the knee. A ruptured artery delayed the second amputation. The Grey Nuns were making candles for Christmas and also, it was thought at the time, for the priest's funeral. The tallow caught fire and in a minute the kitchen was ablaze. The fire extended to the house proper and to the cathedral. Father Goiffon was rescued by Fathers Mestre and Simonet. Three weeks later the amputation of part of the left foot was successful. Father Goiffon gained strength so rapidly that he was able to be back at his mission of St. Joseph's on June 7, 1861, having with the aid of a carpenter fashioned a wooden leg for himself.

Bishop Grace, Bishop Cretin's successor, with Father Ravoux left St. Paul on the morning of August 12, 1861, for the Red River settlements. At Georgetown, they were delayed five days by the late arrival of the boat which was to take them down the river. While here, on Sunday, August 25, Father Ravoux gave the half-breeds and Canadians instructions, and Bishop Grace preached. This was the first religious service held in Georgetown. At Pembina, the Indians and half-breeds were on the shore awaiting the arrival of the boat. Father Goiffon was in

Pembina. He had come to meet them. He had lost none of his zeal, but continued to travel from one settlement to the other looking after the welfare of his parishioners. After administering confirmation to eight persons at Pembina, the bishop and the two priests went to St. Joseph's. Father Ravoux spent the week here giving a mission to the half-breeds, who numbered about a thousand; and the bishop confirmed forty-five persons. Before starting homeward, the bishop and Ravoux visited St. Boniface. On their return to St. Joseph's, they added Father Goiffon, who "was willing & anxious to continue at his post if it should be the Bishop's pleasure that he should do so,"³¹ to their party. They were taking the missionary from the field which they considered too difficult for him now and assigning him to one which would be filled with fewer hardships.³²

During Father Goiffon's absence at St. Boniface, his missions were attended by priests from St. Boniface. Father Simonet, O. M. I., visited both missions.³³ Fathers Thibault and Oram conferred baptism there.³⁴ Late in the fall of 1861, Father André, O. M. I., was assigned to the missions of Pembina and St. Joseph's.³⁵ The loneliness of his first winter at St. Joseph's was broken by a visit in January from Father Lestanc.³⁶ Father André accompanied the hunters on the June, 1862, expedition to the prairie. On his return from the hunt, he received a visit from Bishop Taché, who came to St. Joseph's with Father Germain, whom he left with Father André as a companion.³⁷ Bishop Taché left St. Boniface on April 20, 1863, to attend the Third Provincial Council of Quebec. He had as his companion to Pembina, Father Le Floch. The latter proceeded to St.

³¹ *Acta et Dicta*, I, 177.

³² *Ibid.*, I, 166-183.

³³ Taché, *Vingt Années*, 155.

³⁴ N. Dak. Hist. Soc., *Collections*, II, Part I, Appendix, 29.

³⁵ Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, October 26, 1861; Taché *Vingt Années*, 165.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 176 f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

Joseph's, where he gave a retreat, then in company with Father André returned to Pembina and on to St. Boniface; thus Germain was alone for a short time.³⁸ It was while André was at St. Boniface that Germain succeeded in ransoming, with three horses and two blankets, three boys who had been taken captive by Little Crow's band during the uprising of 1862. Two of the boys were sent to Father Ravoux at St. Paul, where relatives met them, but the third boy was granted permission to remain with the missionaries.³⁹

During the summer hunt of 1863, of which Father André was chaplain, the hunters met the troops of Brigadier General Sibley. With Father André as spokesman, they gave what information they could in regard to the Sioux and assured the general of their loyalty.⁴⁰ Encouraged by the kind treatment he had received from Sibley, Father André addressed a letter to him on August 25, 1863, calling his attention to a meeting he had had with several Sioux Indians:

. . . Last week a party of Sioux claiming to be the deported representatives of the Several bands of Sioux visited St. Joseph, for the purpose as they said, of cementing and confirming the peace entered into between their bands and the Red River Half Breeds. They were led to this course in consequence of the reputed death of two of the Half Breeds during the engagements between the Sioux and your troops. The Sioux feared that the death of these persons might be regarded by the Half Breeds as the re-opening of hostilities, and they hastened to send five deputies (representatives) to give assurance that the several bands of Sioux were anxious to remain at peace.

I assisted at the Council between the Half Breeds and the five deputies, at which the protestations of peaceful relations toward each other were renewed and reaffirmed. In the Council the Sioux appeared very much changed, (if we may judge from the difference of demeanor), from what they were last year. Their language now gives evidence of

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁹ Letter of Father Germain to Brigadier General Sibley, St. Joseph's, August 26, 1863, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; *New York Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, XXIV, 8.

⁴⁰ Taché, *Vingt Années*, 183.

a deep desire on the part of the upper Sioux for the renewal of peaceful relations with the United States Government.

During the Council I addressed a few words to the deputies. I urged them to act promptly in opening negotiations with the Government. I told them that a failure to submit to the requirements of the Government, would result in a certain ruin to them all, the Government was determined that the guilty Indians should be punished, and next year they would see a force still greater than that of the present Year;—this Year the government desired to war only with the murderers of the whites, but if those Sioux who desire peace shall fail to submit to the control of the government at an early day, they will be dragged into the same ruin that awaits the murderers. I urged them to avoid by an early Submission, the greatest misfortune that could befall a people.

I told the deputies to repeat my words to all the Sioux which they promised to do, offering at the same time their thanks for the interest I evinced in their affairs, and the candor with which I had presented to them the difficulties they had to contend with.

Your Expedition, General, in connection with many other happy results, has undoubtedly disposed the mass of the Indians to offer their submission to the government while your course has inspired them with an entire confidence in you. The humanity you exhibited in the preservation of the women and children has touched the wild hearts of these barbarians, who in their own bloody wars devote to death all those who may fall into their hands regardless of age or sex. Such acts of humanity excites the admiration of these people and it is their language and sentiments in regard thereto which I have taken the liberty to translate.

“Gen. Sibley (they said) has shown a great and noble heart in the preservation of our women and children. He has conducted the campaign in a masterly manner, and his humanity has reached our hearts and filled us with admiration. He has disarmed our prejudices, and satisfied us that we may rely implicitly upon the words he may utter.”

Your humanity has truly made a deep impression upon the hearts of the Indians, and has disposed them to listen to and adopt such propositions as you may see proper to make.

After the Council had closed, Standing Buffalo, who was one of the number of Sioux at St. Joseph, visited me and requested me to write to you. He wished me to assure you that neither he nor his men had taken any part in the war against the whites, that he was prepared now, as he always had been, to submit to such deposition as would be

satisfactory to the Government, and he regretted very much that he could not meet you in your camp to give you this assurance. The following is a translation of his closing remarks—speaking to me he said “I come to you in preference to all others, because I know you will transmit my words correctly. Write to the General that I am prepared to deliver myself to him, but I wish the assurance that I shall be treated as formerly, for neither myself nor any young men have committed the slightest injury to the persons or property of the whites, and I do not wish to suffer for the faults of others. I hope the General will write to me, and give me the assurance that upon delivering myself to him, I shall neither be sent to a great distance, nor held a prisoner. I wish his assurance in this regard, and at the same time to be instructed how I may deliver myself and men to him. I wish him to designate a place at which I can meet him next spring. I shall act in accordance with, and have implicit confidence in all the words he may write to me.”

These, General, are the words of this well disposed Indian. The other Sioux, except the people concerned in the Massacre of the whites, are equally disposed to submit.

I shall be happy, General, to be the interpreter of your views regarding these Indians and you know that they will have the utmost confidence in my words, believing as they do that the tongue of a priest can never be the instrument of an untruth. I am anxious, General, that these Indians should be brought to a full submission to the Government, and to obtain that result would not hesitate to visit the main Sioux Camp, at your request if furnished the means of so doing.

Judging from the anxiety displayed by the men, the greater portion of the Sioux are desirous for an opportunity to offer their submission, and the murderers once abandoned by the other Indians, they can be easily reduced.

Some of the Half Breeds report that when Little Crow started on his mysterious (*sic*) expedition last spring, he said that he would return laden with the spoils of his unhappy victims. I give this with some doubt, as it may not be reliable. . . .⁴¹

Father André's offer to serve as agent for Sibley was accepted. In December, he was appointed peace mediator between the Sioux and the government,⁴² having obtained Bishop Taché's

⁴¹ Letter of Father André to Brigadier General Sibley, St. Joseph's, August 25, 1863, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴² Taché, *Vingt Années*, 185.

permission to act under Sibley's instructions. He set out, a few days after his return to St. Joseph's from a visit to Bishop Taché, to visit the camps of Indians at Turtle Mountains and the Mouse River. His work was not completed before the close of the year.⁴³

⁴³ Letter of J. R. Brown to General H. H. Sibley, Fort Abercrombie, December 10, 1863, Sibley Papers, Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Letter of Major G. H. Camp to Brig. Gen. Sibley, Fort Abercrombie, January 23, 1864, *Ibid.*; Taché, *Vingt Années*, 185.

CHAPTER VI

FATHER PIERZ AMONG THE CHIPPEWA (1852-1864)

Father Francis Pierz, the founder of the missions at Grand Portage and Pigeon River, asked to be transferred from the diocese of Detroit to that of St. Paul in the spring of 1852. He had heard the call of Bishop Cretin for missionaries to work among the Indians in his newly created diocese, whose geographical limits were coterminous with Minnesota Territory. From the beginning of his work, Father Pierz had formed an attachment for the Chippewa Indians. His desire, then, to answer Bishop Cretin's call to devote his life to the Christianizing of his "dear" Chippewa Indians in Minnesota would follow as a matter of course. He knew the difficulties which would be connected with the work. He had witnessed the effect of the intercourse of the Chippewa with the fur trader. It brought in its wake drunkenness, theft, and other vices. He was conscious of the hold which the medicine men had on the members of the tribe and of their opposition to Christianity. But he was willing and ready to undergo all sufferings for the sake of their conversion.¹

On June 18, 1852, Father Pierz arrived in St. Paul. He received his appointment as director of the Indian missions north of the Mississippi. Because of the scarcity of priests in the diocese, he was asked to care for the white settlers along the upper Mississippi for a distance of about a hundred miles. He left St. Paul for Crow Wing, the center of his mission activities in Minnesota. Mr. Beaulieu, a trader, travelled fifty miles to meet and bring him to his destination. The first sight to greet the missionary on his arrival at Crow Wing on July 20 was an Indian dance. The Chippewa were celebrating a victory over

¹ *Annalen*, XXII, 490; *Berichte*, XXV, 15; XXVI, 53; Pierz, *Die Indianer*, 28 f., 87.

the Sioux by dancing in and out among the bodies of the slain. Undaunted by the sight, Father Pierz sought to win the good will of the chiefs, to touch their hearts and fill them with an eagerness for the faith. He found the half-breeds among them as much in need of the civilizing and Christianizing influence as were the Indians themselves. Both were given to drunkenness and sorcery. Practically all the returns which the Indians and half-breeds received from the hunt, together with annuity money paid by the government, went for liquor.² He was granted permission by Captain John Todd, in command at Fort Ripley, to occupy a portion of the military reservation not exceeding twenty acres, in the vicinity of Crow Wing, as a site for a church.³ Father Pierz chose the hill on which the Indians celebrated their victory as the site and commenced the foundation. The erection of churches at Sauk Rapids, where the congregation was composed of Canadian French and Germans, and at Belle Prairie, with its half-breed congregation, was begun in the summer of 1852.⁴

The fall and winter of 1852-1853 were spent at Crow Wing. Father Pierz planned to leave Crow Wing at the beginning of May, 1853, to visit Indian villages and establish missions in them. He was deterred for a time because of trouble between the Chippewa and the Winnebago. Two of the Chippewa had been killed by the Winnebago. A large band of warriors was ordered to Long Prairie. Father Pierz, on his way home from a mission journey among the white settlers, received a letter from Father de Vivaldi, asking him to hasten to Long Prairie to help put down the uprising. Father Pierz complied with the request and was successful in ending the trouble. The Chippewa chief, recognizing Father Pierz, was willing to listen to him; and the missionary offered himself as a hostage for the slain Indians.

² *Ibid.*, 84-89; *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XVII, 413.

³ Paper dated Fort Ripley, Minnesota Territory, August 9, 1852, signed by Captain J. B. S. Todd (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

⁴ *Berichte*, XXVI, 55; Pierz, *Die Indianer*, 63.

Peace was concluded and the Indians returned home happy, with presents of bread and pork given them by Father de Valdi and tobacco from the Winnebago. The latter begged Father Pierz to remain with them until such time as they should have concluded a formal peace with all inimical bands of Chippewa Indians.⁵ He, however, was obliged to return to Crow Wing to carry on the work delayed by the outbreak. On the first of June, accompanied by his school assistant and his housekeeper, he left this mission center for a two days' journey to erect a second Indian mission at Mille Lacs. The three men were heavily burdened with mission requisites, baggage, and provisions. The journey was the most difficult Pierz had made. They travelled on foot most of the way, and broke their canoe before they reached their destination. The Indians met the party and conducted them to the hut of the chief, where the missionary was made to feel that the welcome was sincere. The chief assembled the warriors in his hut where they might listen to the instruction of Father Pierz. When the missionary had completed his discourse, the chief arose and enjoined all present to follow the *Black-Robe* and adopt the Catholic faith. He then extended his hand to Father Pierz as a sign of his adherence, and each Indian followed his example. For three weeks, Father Pierz and his teaching assistant instructed them daily in the catechism, prayers, hymns, and reading. Again, as in his earlier experience at Grand Portage, he was surprised at the diligence and talent displayed by many of the Indians, for, within the three weeks, many of them could read the catechism and had committed to memory the prayers and hymns taught them. Father Pierz recorded twenty-six names on his baptismal register between June 13 and June 19, including the principal chief. Father Pierz bought a partially finished house in Mille Lacs for a missionary's house and a school and at his own expense ordered the erection of a church which was left roofless because of a shortage of funds.⁶

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30; *Berichte*, XXVI, 25 f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, XXVI, 57-59; *Annalen*, XXII, 491; Pierz, *Die Indianer*, 85, 89 f.;

During his first two years at Crow Wing, Father Pierz made a careful study of the manner and means by which the obstacles in the way of civilizing and Christianizing the Indians could be overcome. Among his suggestions were the following: (1) That annuities be paid either in the month of July or August, because the Indians would lose nothing by being idle at this time. (2) That payment of the annuities be made at certain designated places where it would be impossible for the Indians to purchase intoxicating liquors. (3) That payment be made in provisions, clothing, guns, nets, kitchen and table utensils, garden and field implements, seeds, and cattle rather than in hard money. (4) That Indians who had been most abstemious during the year should receive a special reward at the time of the yearly payment of some premium as an example for others less temperate. (5) That a definite date should be set as pay day and the time of payment should not extend over a period of more than six or eight days, thus ending the abuse of Indians waiting around in their tents from six weeks to two months for payment. (6) That all payments be made in the presence of the chief of the tribe and that he receipt for same. (7) That the white traders and settlers be forbidden to purchase any annuity goods from the Indians or deprive the Indians of them by unlawful means. (8) That the then-existing system of costly farms maintained for the Indians be done away with and the sum of money annually expended in the maintenance of the same be expended for the education of the children, the erection of orphan asylums, homes for widows, and hospitals so that provision might be made for orphans and those left destitute by the ravages of war carried on between the Chippewa and the Sioux. He believed it would be well to permit the Indians as they adopted civilization and proved themselves diligent and industrious to choose a piece of land to cultivate and on which to make a permanent home.

Baptismal Register of Francis Pierz, first entry by Father Pierz August 1, 1852, last entry by him, July 10, 1870 (photostat), Minn. Hist. Soc. Lib.

The Indians who showed no inclination to do this might well be moved to land southwest of the Missouri River.⁷

In the summer of 1854, the missionary travelled twelve hundred miles, mostly through the woods and on foot since he was without means to procure better transportation. The chiefs of the Indians at Sandy Lake, Leech Lake, and Red Lake invited him personally to found mission stations in their villages. He found it impossible to do this in 1854 with the four mission stations he had previously established.⁸ From time to time, he received financial assistance from mission societies or from friends, but the amount received, while it helped defray some of the current expenses, was never sufficient to give a feeling of permanency to the continuance of the work. Among the societies assisting Father Pierz directly were the Leopoldine Society of Vienna and the Ludwig Mission Society of Munich, though the Society for the Propagation of the Faith gave some financial assistance to the diocese of St. Paul.

As Father Pierz saw the lands vacated by the Indians opened to white settlers, he began about 1854 to write letters and articles describing the beauties of Minnesota, the healthfulness of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and the great economic advantages to be gained by settling within the state. These letters and articles appeared in newspapers, most of them in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*. He might be called the prime mover in the colonization of west central Minnesota in the fifties and sixties and of Stearns County in particular. He invited immigrants to settle at Sauk Rapids, Belle Prairie, Platte River, Swan River, St. Cloud, St. Joseph, Ottertail Lake, and in their vicinity.⁹

It was in the summer of 1855 that the Great Chief of the Chippewa nation came from Leech Lake to Crow Wing to visit Father Pierz. After greeting the missionary friendly, the chief

⁷ *Annalen*, XXII, 178-182.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XXII, 491 f.

⁹ *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XVII, 413 f., 487; XVIII, 17, 422; XX, 269; XXV, 402 f., 412 f., 485; XXVI, 77.

said, "Father, thrice you have promised me to come to convert my followers to the belief in the Great Spirit; now I come to take you! Follow me!"¹⁰ Father Pierz could not go. The new church at Mille Lacs was still unfinished, four others were being built in the German parishes on Sauk River, and the one at Belle Prairie was ready for dedication. The furnishings for the altars were lacking for the churches. It was impossible then to undertake the opening of a mission at the time at Leech Lake.¹¹ Three years later, however, he bought at a cost of one hundred thirty dollars a mission house in Leech Lake, paid for by money sent him by the Ludwig Mission Society.¹²

When Father Francis Xavier Weninger, S. J., made a journey through Minnesota in 1856, he preached a mission at Father Pierz's parish in Belle Prairie. His congregation was composed of Canadian French and half-breeds. He conducted the mission in the French language, which all understood. Father Pierz heard confessions in Chippewa.¹³

In the summer of 1858, Father Lawrence Lautischar, a Slovenian countryman of Father Pierz, came to the Minnesota Indian missions. Father Lautischar was not a novice, for he had come to America from Carniola in company with Bishop Baraga in 1854. During the time spent among the Indians in Michigan, he had mastered the Ottawa and Chippewa languages to such an extent that he was able to preach fluently in them. For a few years before the advent of Father Lautischar to Minnesota, the Indians at Red Lake had asked that a mission station be established among them. It was for the purpose of erecting this that Fathers Pierz and Lautischar left Crow Wing on the morning of August 1. A journey of seven days brought them to their destination. Here the missionaries labored together for two months in building up a flourishing mission among the Indians. The large mission house was filled twice daily with the

¹⁰ Translated from German as given in *Annalen*, XXIV, 85.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, XXIV, 83-88.

¹² *Ibid.*, XXVII, 387.

¹³ *Ibid.*, XXV, 534.

Indians who came for services and instructions. Father Pierz with his homeopathic remedies went out among the sick, curing them of bodily ills and winning for himself respect and love. He left the mission at the beginning of October with a promise to the chief that he would spend the greater part of the winter with him. Father Lautischar was left in charge of the mission to continue the religious instructions and a school which had been opened. Thereupon, Father Pierz began his visit to his parishes among the white settlers and half-breeds. It was in the midst of Jubilee devotions at Belle Prairie that he learned that the happy experience of having a coworker was of short duration.¹⁴ Father Lautischar, in returning from a sick call across the lake, was frozen to death on December 3, 1858, as Pierz sadly wrote to Bishop Baraga:

Following in the footsteps of the great mission patriarch, Francis Xavier, Father Lautischar, on the third of December, the feast of Saint Francis Xavier, made his way alone, fasting and praying, over twelve miles of difficult travelling to the other side of Red Lake to visit a sick heathen. Deceived by the mildness of the morning's weather, too lightly clad, he intended to make the journey to and back in one day, praying uninterruptedly and putting forth every physical effort. He would take neither a companion, nor a dog, nor more clothing and food. On his return journey, the wind, which had been from the south, changed, and, during the night, a stormy wind swept over the lake with piercing cold. The servant of God succumbed to this. Many traces of his having knelt on the snow which covered the ice on Red Lake on the journey out and back adequately evidenced with what fragrance his devout prayers for the conversion of the heathen Indian ascended, on this the last day of his life, to the throne of Heaven and they will surely not remain unheard.¹⁵

Father Lautischar was thirty-eight years old at the time of his death. He had won the hearts of the Indians at Red Lake and his loss was keenly felt by them. There was no one to take his place. Red Lake would then, until such time in the future as

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, XXVII, 387 f.

¹⁵ Translated from German as given in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XXII, 326.

another assistant would join Father Pierz, be only one of the stations cared for from Crow Wing.¹⁸

In the early part of January 1859, a few days after the burial at Crow Wing on December 26, of Father Lautischar, Pierz turned his steps toward Leech Lake, three days' journey distant from Crow Wing. Requisites for the establishment of the promised mission were taken with him as well as provisions. The mission house, bought the preceding year, was ready for him on his arrival. It was daily filled to capacity during the two months which the missionary spent here. Eager for instruction, the Indians crowded it. Old and young alike attended. The children proved no exception to the missionary's experience among the Chippewa. In fourteen days, many were able to read the Chippewa language and in three weeks many were sufficiently prepared for the reception of baptism. During the ceremony, the Indian children sang the baptismal hymns which Baraga had included in his hymn book. The old heathen Indians were deeply affected. The best singer was honored as acolyte. He served also as cook for a reward of clothing. The Indians, in the month of March, began to scatter into the woods. They went to their sugar-making camps. As a rule the sugar-making season lasted for two months. As there was nothing to be accomplished during the absence of the Indians, Pierz with his cook made the journey on foot back to Crow Wing. He felt that never during the course of his missionary career had he been able to effect so much good as at Leech Lake. Here again, his knowledge of homeopathic remedies had brought him into general favor. When no doctor was available, he cared for the sick. The Indians were suffering from famine, as a plague had destroyed most of the rabbits and the winter was so severe that the lakes and rivers were frozen to a depth of three feet, which made fishing impossible. When Father Pierz had seen the effort made to sus-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, XXII, 326; *Annalen*, XXVII, 388 f.

tain life on the bark of trees, he gave the Indians his year's supply of food. Many mothers had brought their children to him asking for food. In some cases where the child was no longer able to take nourishment, Father Pierz succeeded in baptizing it before it died. In instances where the consent of the parent for the baptism of a dying child could not be obtained, the missionary, under pretext of washing the child's face, administered the sacrament. The winter famine had been a warning to the Indians to cultivate the gardens and fields. From his earliest days as a missionary among the Indian tribes of the Northwest, he had attempted to teach the Indians to plant and sow, and had urged them to erect mission stations in order to draw them from their nomadic life. He had found the Chippewa much better adapted to this than the Ottawa.¹⁷

During the winter of 1859-1860, Father Pierz visited the missions of Belle Prairie, Swan River, and Platte River from Crow Wing. As soon as spring opened, he began a mission journey on the upper Mississippi among the Indians whom he had previously visited. The time was too short to prepare adults for baptism. The missionary instructed his neophytes to strengthen them in the faith and baptized a number of children but few adults. His homeopathic remedies were brought into use with success. He had carried garden seeds with him and gave these to such of the Indians as were willing to plant and cultivate the ground. Duty again called him to the care of the parishes among the white settlers. When he arrived at Crow Wing, he found three Indians awaiting him. They had come from White Oak Point¹⁸ at their chief's bidding to take the missionary back with them in order to receive the chief and his tribe into the Church. Father Pierz accepted the invitation and returned with the Indians. This journey of ten days' duration was made up the Mississippi. A chapel

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, XXVII, 497-502.

¹⁸ On the Mississippi River about halfway between Lake Winnibigoshish and Pokegama Lake and five miles from Deer River.

of white cedar carpeted with bright mats had been built before his arrival. To this he was led immediately. Here he outlined the purpose of his coming and gave a short exposition on the faith. The chief in the name of all present placed himself and his tribe at the disposal of Father Pierz for instructions. The ceremony of the reception of a number of these Indians into the Church on July 22, 1860 is described by Father Pierz in a letter to *Der Wahrheitsfreund*:

The solemn services opened at eight o'clock in the morning with morning prayer according to Bishop Baraga's book; then a beautiful hymn sung by my pupils, four girls and two boys, followed. This was sung from the same book and so expressively that I could not restrain tears of joy. The Holy Spirit was invoked to enlighten the heathens and to inflame them with the gift of faith. I then preached at length on the necessity and good effects of baptism. After this, another hymn was sung, the theme of which was the happiness of those who accept and keep the word of God. The Indians present were surprised that their children had in so short a time learned to raise their voices in song in praise of the Great Spirit. Then, I solemnly baptized twenty Indians of all ages. The first of them was Chief Wemitegojens; then followed his daughter, fifteen years of age. I myself had to act as sponsor for these two as there was no Catholic in the neighborhood. I gave to the chief the name of my holy patron, Francis Xavier, and to his daughter the name Cecilia. All the other Indians had these two as sponsors. A third hymn, wherein the newly baptized renounces idolatry, all vices and heathen customs, and surrenders himself to the service of God and the salvation of his soul, was then sung to an effective melody.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass began about noon, the three beautiful Indian hymns being again repeated. At the end, I gave a short sermon, explaining the greatest of all sacrifices, the Holy Mass, the consolation and salvation of all Catholics.

The morning services ended at one o'clock in the afternoon. Other Indians who desired to embrace the faith asked to be baptized. Of these present, the chief counted one hundred and twenty. I told them that holy baptism would have to be deferred to another time when they should be better prepared for its reception. At the request of the chief, I promised to baptize fifteen of them after Vespers.

Vespers in Indian began at three o'clock in the afternoon. I gave another sermon on the baptismal vows and the duties of a Catholic.

Night prayer and a few hymns followed. Then the baptismal ceremony began and lasted until ten o'clock. A prayer of thanksgiving closed the ceremony.¹⁰

Two successful journeys to the Chippewa Indians were made by Father Pierz in 1861. In the company of two half-breeds from Crow Wing, the missionary travelled from Leech Lake to Red Lake. His purpose in this visit was similar to the one made in the early spring of 1860, namely, to confirm his converts in the faith. A few adult Indians as well as many of the children received baptism. The return to Crow Wing was made by water as much as possible. The second journey of 1861 was made to Ottertail Lake. Here the missionary found fifty Canadian French families with whom he spent eight days. The few non-Catholics of the place attended the services conducted by Father Pierz. From Ottertail Lake, the missionary travelled fifteen miles to the north where, on Big Pine Lake, he found a small village of half-breeds, sixty-five of whom were Catholics. They were pleased at his coming and profited from his ten days' visit. Across the lake at Squaw Point, a peaceful tribe of more than three hundred heathen Indians lived. For the first time, they now heard the truths of religion expounded, and they seemed eager to embrace Christianity. Father Pierz spent a week with them and promised to return to them the following spring or send another priest who would prepare them for baptism.

He turned his steps toward Crow Wing, stopping at Ottertail Lake on the way. The Catholics there begged that a mission be founded among them, because they felt that in a short time there would be a flourishing parish since immigration to Minnesota was proceeding rapidly. Before winter set in, he again made the rounds of his missions among the white settlers and half-breeds; and then after a short rest at Crow Wing, he went to visit Bishop Grace in St. Paul. The latter had

¹⁰ Translated from German as given in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XXIV, 493 f.

administered the sacrament of confirmation in Crow Wing on August 15, to fourteen persons, three of whom were Indians.²⁰ Father Pierz made the most of his opportunity in St. Paul to beg that priests be sent to help him. He returned to Crow Wing, happy in the thought that Fathers John Ireland and Theodore Venn, who possessed the necessary qualities for missionary work among the Indians, would join him in the spring as his assistants.²¹ Father Pierz was destined to meet with disappointment; for neither of the priests became an Indian missionary, the former becoming an army chaplain.

The Indian missions were again visited by Father Pierz in the spring of 1862, but the year 1862 was a discouraging one. The uprising begun by the Sioux aroused the Chippewa against the white settlers. Deceived, despoiled, cheated, deprived of property by unscrupulous traders and agents, demoralized by whiskey traffic carried on among them, and wrought up by Sioux rebels, from three to four hundred Chippewa under the leadership of Hole-in-the-Day began their depredations. They stole cattle, food, clothing, and household goods at Leech Lake, Ottertail Lake, and near Crow Wing. When word reached Father Pierz that the Indians were planning to burn a house near Crow Wing, which they had robbed the previous night, he set out for their camp on the opposite side of the Mississippi. With tobacco tied in a cloth, he approached the carefully guarded camp. A guard pointed out a cross-line extending over the sandy road and informed the missionary that he must not pass over it. In order that the chief's command would not be disobeyed, the Indians carried the missionary over the line. The chief was then informed that the missionary desired to speak to him. Father Pierz asked why they were encamped there and what their purpose was. Receiving no reply, he spoke to them for about half an hour on the imprudence of the uprising, the evil of stealing, and the consequences which

²⁰ *Acta et Dicta*, I, 168.

²¹ *Berichte*, XXXII, 42-45; *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XXV, 592 f.

must follow their wrongdoing. He pictured the army which would come against them and annihilate the whole race unless they availed themselves of the time given to reconcile themselves with the government. He succeeded in getting them to come to Crow Wing, where peace was concluded. He rejoiced that not a Catholic Indian from Mille Lacs, Sandy Lake, Pokegama and Red lakes took part in this uprising.²² After the Indians had become reconciled with the government, they promised to become Christians and adopt civilized customs. They signified their readiness for education and a settled life. They were willing to cultivate fields and gardens, to erect their homes in the villages as the white settlers did. They begged that missions be established among them. The only promise he felt free to make was that he would comply with their requests when he was given assistance in the way of coworkers and the necessary funds.

That Father Pierz made every effort to get missionaries is evidenced by his communication from Crow Wing to *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 4, 1863:

After having labored most assiduously for ten years as a Catholic missionary in the beautiful state of Minnesota, with God's blessing on the twelve newly erected mission stations among the Chippewa Indians, the half-breeds, the French, and the Germans, I find myself in my seventy-eighth year considerably enfeebled. Weakened in the fulfilling of the duties of my state of life, I can scarcely travel the long, difficult miles of the mission journeys among the Indians, and, thus, no longer get desired results from my work. On this account, I had published during the past year in *Der Wahrheitsfreund* a petition imploring the Bishops in the United States and their zealous clergy for good missionary priests to come to my assistance in the Indian missions through Bishop Grace of St. Paul. I proposed also to these self-sacrificing Catholic people the formation of a charitable mission association for the conversion of the wild heathens of North America. But all to no avail, for almost immediately the Indian uprising occurred, and this caused hostile feelings among the whites against the Indians.

After this, I turned my petition to Europe to beg for assistant priests

²² *Ibid.*, XXVI, 89; *Berichte*, XXXIII, 32.

for the pressing need of the Indian missionary. Up to the present time this has been fruitless, apparently because of the exaggerated newspaper accounts of the uprising, which in Europe had made the Indian an object of hatred. Notwithstanding the lack of physical strength and mission requisites, I have, since spring, made two extended, difficult mission journeys to my dear Indians with consoling results. After caring for my Catholics, curing the sick, and adding some converts to my former neophytes, I returned again to Crow Wing, where I am burdened daily with caring for the temporal and spiritual needs of the Indians and am begged continually by the chiefs to continue my care of the missions established among them, which, under the present conditions, is simply impossible.

With a net and a garden, I can live as an Indian, but I cannot build a mission house nor a church. I can personally care for one mission completely but I do not wish to abandon all the others. I am forced again to raise my voice from the Indian wilderness and humbly reiterate my former urgent request, since I cannot hope for assistance from my bishop, who, with twenty priests and one hundred and eleven country missions, can only with difficulty meet the financial needs of his diocese.

Lend then, most worthy Prelates and noble Bishops whom the Holy Spirit has chosen to rule the Church of God, a willing ear to my intercession for our poor Indians in the northern regions of Minnesota and send some servants of God eager for the conversion of souls, at least from those dioceses blessed with flourishing seminaries, if not from all. If from each large bishopric, only one good missionary comes supplied with all requisites, then soon many little sheep will be gathered from the Indian wilderness into the fold of Christ.

There are now promising and flourishing religious orders in North America, whose tendency and whose constitutions lend themselves not only to the care of souls in their localities but also to the conversion of the heathen and to the zealous spreading of the Catholic Church. Correspond with my bishop and, under the banner of Christ, furnish him with strong auxiliaries. Come, dear Fathers, and extend your sphere of work to the wild heathens who still wander in the darkness of unbelief and wait for the call of faith. Here you can do infinite good for the honor of God and your neighbor and obtain for yourselves and your orders praiseworthy merits.

Hear also, you, my dear Brothers in Christ Jesus among the secular clergy, my cry for help for the pressing needs of the Indian missions in Minnesota. Test your hearts and minds and, if you find yourself called by God to the Indian missions and feel enkindled with a burning love for the salvation of souls, then declare your wish to your bishop

and beg him for a transfer or leave of absence to spend your time in the missions of this diocese, where you will be received in a fatherly manner and with open arms by our beloved bishop. Under the banner of Christ, then, come quickly to the Indian missions to make happy conquests for the kingdom of God. You will be subjected to many hardships through the manner of living and inconveniences of the country, but the Lord will know how to sweeten the bitterness of mission duties with the consolation of winning souls for Him. You will, finally, according to the promises of Christ, attain a glorious resurrection and an immortal crown in heaven. *Fiat.*

Hear you, also, beloved laymen and pious Catholics, the voice crying from the Indian wilderness and unite yourself body and soul, under God and your zealous director's will, into a charitable union of a mission association for the conversion of the heathen Indians in North America, that with alms and prayers, you may assist our Indian missions and thus share in the good works of the missions and so attain more easily future happiness.

God wished to manifest Himself to us in a special manner in the bright cross which appeared in the heavens on the evening of the Three Kings in 1855 and again in 1862, that He might bring our Indians as He brought the Three Kings of old by a heavenly sign to the adoration of Christ. And our Indians, who everywhere desire Catholic priests for instructions, show us clearly that they are ripe for conversion. Let us put our hand to the plough and await the blessing of Heaven.²³

But Father Pierz at the close of 1863²⁴ was still without an assistant. Tirelessly, this intrepid missionary of seventy-eight years travelled from Crow Wing, eastward and westward, northward and southward, throughout the whole territory under his care. He went where duty called him, from the hut of the early settler to the wigwam of the Indian. And the work begun by him among the Chippewa is continued on the reservations by the Benedictine Fathers.

²³ Translated from German as given in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, XXVII, 7.

²⁴ In 1863, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, appointed Bishop Thomas L. Grace of St. Paul, Bishop Henry B. Whipple of Minnesota (Episcopalian), and Rev. Thomas S. Williamson of Davenport, Iowa, as a board of visitors to attend the annuity payments to the Indians, to inspect the fields and other improvements, and to report on the condition of the Chippewa reservations and on persons living on them.—*Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1863.*

CONCLUSION

The Catholic missionary among the Indians and half-breeds of the Northwest found himself in the midst of hardships, placed in difficult positions, without sufficient funds and assistance to carry on his work. Throughout the history of mission activities within the Minnesota and Dakota areas to 1864, the Catholic missionary except in two instances received no aid from the federal government. The territory was large and, as settlers rushed into it, the spiritual needs of Catholic settlers had to be provided for. Until the diocese of St. Paul was erected, the region had been the frontier section of the St. Louis, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Dubuque dioceses. In the fifties and early sixties, the diocese of St. Paul was a frontier one, dependent on other dioceses for shepherds to care for its flock. It was then impossible to supply the number of priests needed to Christianize and civilize the Indians of the territory. The missionary had to depend upon charitable contributions with which to carry on his work among the Indians. No association had been formed as early as 1864 among the Catholics in the United States for the express purpose of fostering Indian missions.

The mission at Pembina, whose founding in 1818 seemed propitious, was of short duration, because of the boundary adjustment of the same year. Founded under British auspices, it was ordered evacuated by the Hudson's Bay Company when proved to be on American soil. Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and Pigeon River, which gave promise of becoming mission centers, remained mission stations for lack of missionaries to carry on the work. The Winnebago mission suffered from lack of proper management. The work among the Sioux, the Mandans, the Aricaras, and the Grosventres was transitory in its nature. The seed, however, was sown for future work, but

nothing permanent was accomplished in the way of mission establishments before 1864. The mission activities among the Chippewa begun by Father Pierz on the upper Mississippi and by Father Belcourt south of the boundary line in the Dakota area were lasting. More, undoubtedly, might have been accomplished had the founders had the assistance needed to carry on the work. The foundation, nevertheless, was laid and others took up and continued the work so well begun by the pioneers in the field.

Every effort was exerted by the missionary to offset the demoralizing influence of unscrupulous traders and agents among the Indians. Where possible, as at Fond du Lac, the temperance movement was introduced among them. They were encouraged to give up their nomadic life. They were taught that work is not a degradation. The attention of government officials was directed to existing evils and constructive criticism was made, whereby they might be mitigated or altogether removed. The missionary convinced the Indian of wrong and counseled and persuaded him to do right.

The missionary spent his days in a wilderness, travelling over hills and valleys, forests and prairies, marshes and swamps, rivers and lakes, and fallen trees. On foot, on snowshoes, on horseback, by dog train or canoe, he covered the vast expanse of territory under his care. His nights were spent where duty found him, on the open prairie, in an Indian's wigwam, in a settler's cabin, or at his own fireside. He suffered from the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter, and yet he went on his way burning with zeal for the conversion of the heathen.

The dwellers of forests and prairies, the fur trader, the merchant, and the pioneer settler felt his influence and profited by it in varying degrees. He was fearless among the Indians, and well might he be, for the *Black-Robe* tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries still survived in the Indian heart. The *Black-Robe* was not a foe, but a friend, a protector, one who came into their midst for their advantage, not his own.

It was the missionary who preached the doctrine of peace to the Indians. Called upon as the messenger of peace, the missionary went among the Indians in an effort to settle the disputes between the tribes and succeeded in his labors. Father Belcourt exerted an influence in maintaining peace among the Indians of the northern and western area of Dakota. Father de Smet's presence was desired at treaty negotiations to facilitate the work. Father Pierz effected a truce between the Chippewa and Winnebago in 1853 and counseled and succeeded in persuading the rebel Chippewa to enter into peace negotiations in the uprising of 1862. In December of the next year, Father André was appointed mediator between the Sioux and the government. He took upon himself the task of visiting the Sioux encampments to urge the Indians to sue for peace in order to avoid the possibility of extermination in the war of retaliation which would be carried on against them by the government should they fail to negotiate for peace. Although at times the missionaries failed in their efforts, yet, on the whole, more amicable relations were retained with the Indians because of the admonitions given them by the *Black-Robes*, harbingers of peace.

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